

COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XIII.—No. 328.

[REGISTERED AT THE
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 18th, 1903.

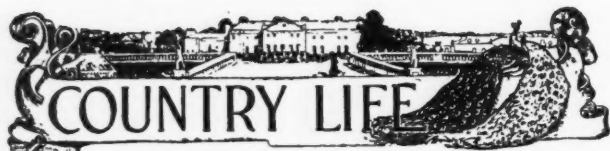
[PRICE SIXPENCE.
BY POST, 6d.]



LALLIE CHARLES.

THE COUNTESS OF CHESTERFIELD.

Titchfield Road, N.W.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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The PROPOSED BARRAGE OF THE THAMES.

A SUGGESTION has recently been made that the upper part of the Thames Valley should be the scene of an experiment in water storage on a great scale for the future supply of London and the metropolitan area. The idea has been introduced under the title of a "Barrage of the Thames." The phrase recalls great operations on the Nile. But it is in reality misleading in a sense, because what is meant is not a complete barring of the river by a dam, so as to hold up the water behind, but a scheme to divert the surplus water in flood-time, so that instead of running away to the sea, and doing possible damage all the way, it may be diverted into reservoirs, where it will be available for use in the summer, when the amount in the river itself is reduced. It is also maintained that the barrage lakes might easily be made of such a size that they might take the place of any more costly and ambitious scheme, such, for instance, as that of making an aqueduct from some area in the Welsh mountains.

It is said, reasonably enough, that the cost of buying even a thousand acres of land on which to dig or embank reservoirs would be absolutely nothing in comparison with the cost of first making a reservoir in Wales, and then bringing the water thence to London. The creation of great supplementary lakes as low down the river as Staines, and even next to Ranelagh, has caused no diminution in the normal amount of water in the river. Large lakes are always an improvement to any neighbourhood, as witness the reservoirs for the old canals at Hendon, Tring, and Elstree. These have been a great addition to the scenery of what was previously a very waterless country. When reservoirs have to be made on the flat, and are embanked, they lose their picturesque character as part of the scenery. But to anyone who is allowed to walk on the enclosing banks they are always a source of interest, being full of fish and haunted by wildfowl, while the mere sight of extensive areas of water is always pleasant. There is no reason to doubt that on certain parts of the Upper Thames Valley there are depressions, the sites of old

marshes and swamps, which could be dug out and converted into lakes with very little engineering difficulty to overcome. The fall of the Thames is very considerable. Its source in the Cotswolds is three hundred feet above sea level. A barrage below Oxford would be almost impossible, as the navigation would be impeded, and the country adjacent to the river is not well suited for draining off supplies from the river in flood-time. Probably, by the natural lie of the ground, such a barrage would be constructed either on the portion of the river which lies above Oxford, but below the infall of the principal tributaries from North Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire, such as the Evenlode, the Windrush, and the Colne, or in some place marked out by favourable conditions of level on the upper part of the stream, above the limits of navigation. The area adjacent to either is singularly remote from the world, and very scantily populated. There are few vested interests to interfere with in the form of previous settlements. The villagers of ancient days evidently looked on the low flats by the river as undesirable ground. They were liable to floods, and are still liable to them. Probably they were also, in old days, ague-haunted and feverish. Now all that is over, but as a rule the villagers give the river a wide berth. It flows for mile after mile through flat meadows, often swampy or intersected by small cuts and streams. At the same time the lie of the river is nowhere such as to lend itself to an overspill by small devices such as enable the West Countrymen to turn their smiling valleys into water-meadows.

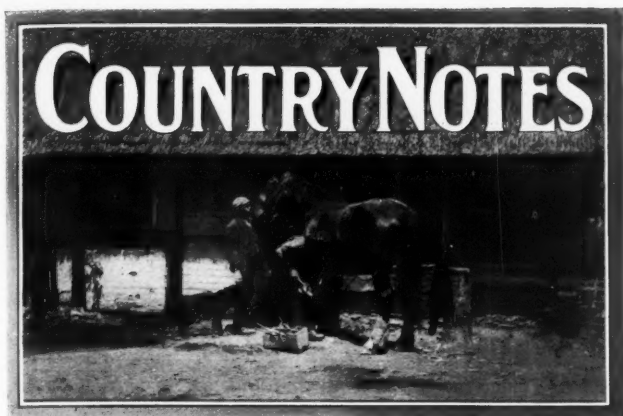
So far the scheme does not present any special difficulties. Land is cheap, there would be no disturbance of settlements, the fall is ample to secure an inflow, and the landscape would not suffer, and might be benefited. The distance from London is about one-third of that from London to the central Welsh mountains, and the delivery of the water would have the great advantage, that the pipes could follow the natural line of the river, being carried at the level of the banks all the way.

The amount of water available, the season at which it should be taken, and the possible effects on the Lower Thames would then need to be considered. The depletion of the river by the continuous drafts made upon it throughout the year by existing arrangements with the water companies is serious, and admitted. If the barrage merely meant that the water was to be abstracted higher up, and diverted into reservoirs for the use of London, the only result would be to deplete the Thames higher up, as it is now depleted below Ditton; but that is not the idea of those who favour a barrage and great store reservoirs in the Upper Valley. They desire not to "bleed" the river all the year round, but to store the enormous surplus of waste water which rushes off to the sea along the Thames channel in the winter rains. For the last half century the inhabitants of the Upper Valley, and lately those of the lower reaches between Oxford and Reading, have been struggling to get rid of this surplus water, which the river-bed is there too narrow to contain. Heavy rates have for many years been levied on the owners above Lechlade to pay for various improvements to enable the water to get away faster to the sea. Locks have been tinkered with, new cuts made, weirs altered. A bankful Thames in winter is a sight to see. The whole channel, from the edge of which you looked down some four or five feet or more in summer to the surface, is brimful of hurrying, oily, celadon-coloured or soapstone-coloured water, representing an addition to the summer level of a stream of good drinkable water, from thirty to forty yards across and five feet deep, moving at a speed of about two and a-half miles an hour. In other words, at a point where the river is forty yards across and the difference between summer level and flood level is four feet, there pass, in an hour, nearly forty million gallons of water of good quality, which, if it could be diverted into storage reservoirs, would be as wholesome as any now drunk in London. Not one drop of this remains in the river to swell its volume later. It is simply surplus flood water.

Taking the average number of Thames "spates" as about four per annum, when the river is bankful, if not overflowing, and allowing two days of twenty-four hours as the maximum for each, we get a surplus for each spate of over two thousand million gallons per flood, or six thousand million gallons for six days of a bankful Thames. To this must be added the increment both when the river is rising and when it is falling. The number of gallons allowed per head in the estimates of the New Water Board for London is, we believe, rather over sixty gallons per diem. It follows then that on the estimates given above, six days' full flood in the Upper Thames would give one hundred days' supply of water for one million people.

Our Portrait Illustrations.

THIS week our frontispiece is a portrait of the Countess of Chesterfield, the daughter of Mr. Charles Henry Wilson, M.P. On another page will be found a pretty picture of the Hon. Mrs. Watson's little daughter seated beside a splendid St. Bernard.



THE country is watching with great interest the reports that come to hand of the travels of King Edward VII. As might have been assumed, he has everywhere been received enthusiastically, and there can be no doubt whatever that his journey, although not meant to have any political importance, cannot but conduce towards the amity of nations. His Majesty possesses in an eminent degree the quality of tact which distinguished his illustrious mother, and the benefit of this to the country cannot be over-estimated. Whatever the constitution may be, the head of the State is always in such a position that his acts receive an interpretation and a significance not attached to those of lesser standing. It is, however, nothing short of a national blessing that we have in King Edward a Sovereign whose natural tendency is towards peace-making, and the establishment of cordial relations with those who come into contact with him. The consequence is that he is equally popular at Berlin and Paris, among our own people at Gibraltar, and in Italy.

Easter weather this year turned out to be a delusion and a snare. On Good Friday the air was as soft and balmy as it might have been in July; on Saturday a period of almost Arctic frost set in. Snowfalls have been reported from nearly every part of the country; the hills in Wales, the North of England, and Scotland are all white, and the landscape is more like what we expect to see at Christmas than at Easter. This means something much more serious than the spoiling of a day's amusement. Up to Easter the spring had been an unusually mild and early one, so that fruit trees, which do not usually bloom till the middle or end of April, were already opening their blossoms, and it is greatly feared that damage which may be irretrievable has been done to them. If this frost had come a little earlier it would have had the salutary effect of checking without seriously damaging vegetation. As it is, the result is likely to be disastrous in the extreme.

So many ancient practices are dying out, that it is pleasant to hear of a revival of the old egg pastimes once so popular on Easter Monday. At Preston it is estimated that some 40,000 children assembled to roll their eggs, but this seems to be carrying the practice to the other extreme. What the origin of this ceremony is seems to be in doubt. It existed long before the Christian era began, and, like many other Pagan rites, appears to have been adapted by the Fathers of the Church. However that may be, there used to be no pleasanter sight than that of country children going from farm to farm with their baskets collecting eggs on Easter Monday morning, and the business of dyeing them used to be the most important function of the day. We do not much care for huge town populations assembling in their thousands to roll eggs, but this innocent rustic practice might be revived with advantage.

The nominal opening of the cricket season at the Oval on Easter Monday must have been a somewhat uncomfortable sight to the spectators, as the game is not one that is pleasant to watch in a snowstorm. But it had one redeeming feature; W. G. Grace, the wonder of the cricket world, who will be fifty-five years of age next June, came out in excellent form and played a very attractive innings. This gratified the crowd, and we cannot wonder at it. The veteran has been playing now for well on to forty years, and during that time has done more great things in cricket than any of his contemporaries, and those who watched him bat on Easter Monday have seen something of which they may be glad in time to tell their children and grandchildren.

The weather always supplies a very convenient topic of conversation, and one of the most interesting theories propounded in regard to it is that it comes in cycles. But Mr. Somerby

Wallis and Mr. Hugh Robert Mill have demolished this explanation. They go to facts, "the chieftains that winna ding," and show that the weight of evidence does not support the idea that there is any order or plan—"rainfall records in the British Islands for past years do not correspond with any definite cycle." If we consider the vast number of forces that affect the weather this is exactly what we should expect to find. Wind has more to do with it than anything else, and though it may not be literally true that "the wind bloweth where it listeth," the ascertained causes of it blowing are so much liable to modification that calculation is not possible.

Among the methods of enjoying the Easter holiday, one of the most delightful, as it seems to have been the most popular with those who could afford it, was the pastime of motoring. The keen wind and the menace of snow caused those who went out in cars to don their heaviest coats, while the dryness of the roads rendered the use of goggles compulsory. But wherever one went motors were to be seen scudding along the country lanes and bringing fresh colour to the occupants. Indeed, for a Bank Holiday we can imagine no pleasanter amusement. Trains on such a day are practically impossible, as the excursionists throng the carriages of every class and put comfort out of the question. With a motor, however, one can go where one will, and avoid or ride through the crowds. It says very much for the advance made in the construction of cars that there were very few accidents, and, indeed, the results seem to show that a motor is really safer than a horse. Motor bicycles also were very largely used, and offer a cheap and pleasant way of scouring the country.

The dreadful accident in the recent automobile race at Nice, which resulted in the tragically sudden death of Count Zborowski, may serve as a warning of the very great danger of going at a high speed on a road with sudden turnings. The late Count was an expert and practised automobilist, and it was far from his first experience in the exciting sport of motor-racing, but he was famed as a driver who pushed daring to the extreme of rashness. The car, a Mercedes, was found with the index showing that it was going at the fourth speed at the moment that, failing to turn the angle, it was dashed on the rocks; and with the gradient of the road at that point this would mean a speed, as it is reckoned, of over a hundred kilometres an hour. Some years ago Count Zborowski was known as one of the best riders, with the best horses, in the best of our hunting countries, and as a horseman it was then said of him that, in addition to his skill and command of horseflesh, he had the advantage of not knowing that there was such a word as "fear" in the dictionary. It was, without doubt, this over-daring spirit that led to his tragic death in the far more dangerous sport of motor-racing.

LOVE.

O, valley lovers, think you love
Being all of joy, knows naught of sorrow?
A day, a night
Of swift delight,
That fears no dread, grey-dawning morrow?
O, valley lovers, think you love
Knows only laughter, naught of weeping?
A rose-fed fire
Of warm desire
For ever burning, never sleeping?
O, lovers, little know ye love!
Love is a flame that feeds on sorrow--
A lone star bright
Through endless night
That waits a never-dawning morrow.

WILFRID WILSON GIBSON.

The statistics of the exodus on a Bank Holiday are always extremely interesting, and this year, if they do not establish a record, which some of the newspapers maintain they do, they at least show that the tendency of townspeople to go to the country on Bank Holiday increases year by year. A rough estimate shows that Hampton Court was the most popular resort, that Hampstead Heath came next, and the football matches made a good third. We should like, however, to have figures showing the number of those who went to a considerable distance. The week-end tickets instituted by the various railways have undoubtedly exercised a wonderful influence in inducing people to visit the very extreme parts of the country, and we learn that several of the long-distance trains carried a larger number of passengers than they have ever been known to carry before. The luncheon and dining arrangements were taxed to their utmost.

The Conference of the National Union of Elementary Teachers assumes more importance this year than is generally attached to it. In the first place it has to criticise the new Education Act, concerning the working of which much interest is felt. Yet on this matter it would be premature for the teachers to pronounce an opinion. So far, all that has been

done is to dislocate the old arrangements, and those brought into existence by the Act have not yet been sufficiently tested. But, on the other hand, the London Education Bill offers a subject on which it will be most interesting to hear the views of the elementary teachers. So far as matters have gone at present they do not seem to be at all favourable, but perhaps before the end of the conference the teachers will subject this important Bill to a clearer and more impartial analysis than has hitherto been accorded to it. The most important objection yet raised is the absence of a central authority.

Mr. Henry Johnson, writing in the current number of the *Pharmaceutical Journal*, makes some observations on the Report of the Committee on Poisons appointed by the Lord President of the Privy Council that deserve the serious consideration of landlords and sportsmen. It is stated in this document that "Five-and-thirty years ago the killing of weeds, of parasitical insects, and of fungoid growths upon growing crops, by means of poisonous substances, was rarely, if ever, practised; but such substances are now to be reckoned among the regular auxiliaries of agriculture and horticulture." Mr. Johnson describes this as an astounding statement, but, of course, all of us who are interested in the modern development of husbandry are well aware that it is perfectly true. The question raised by Mr. Johnson is, however, a very important one; it is, that the poisons used to kill weeds and insects may be fatal to game and other birds.

Mr. Johnson's own personal evidence is so curious that it would be interesting to have it confirmed or otherwise by independent observers. He says that the poisoning of animals is largely on the increase, and that this poisoning breaks out in a district in the form of an epidemic. One explanation of this is, that when the poisons are first put on the grasses they are easily accessible, but in time they are washed into the ground by rain and cease to be injurious. He next instances a number of rooks "that kept falling down dead as they flew home in the evening." Now, if these rooks were poisoned by substances placed on grasses or trees, it is quite obvious that partridges or pheasants are subject to the same accident. We need not dwell on the very great importance of this question. Luckily, the majority of sportsmen in this country are also interested in the cultivation of the land, and are well able to say whether the use of poisonous material in the destruction of weeds and insects is likely to kill birds or not. Mr. Johnson does not seem very familiar with the agricultural aspect of the question, but the objection having been raised, it will be well to have it thoroughly sifted.

Before Parliament separated for the Easter recess, some measure of reassurance was given to the public as regards one of our foreign complications. It does not look so probable, as had been asserted, that Germany has tied us to her chariot wheels in the matter of the Bagdad Railway. The original statement made in the *National Review* and elsewhere was that the railway was to be a German affair, that our Government had agreed to find some, at all events, of the necessary capital, and to subsidise the new undertaking by transferring to it the contract for the Indian mails, and, finally, that Germany had agreed to transfer the undertaking when completed to Russia. From Mr. Balfour's written statement it appears that the railway will be Turkish, that "British capital and British control are to be on an absolute equality with the capital and control of any other Power," and that we are to consider certain other "suggestions." In the first place, it is proposed that we should agree to an increase of the Turkish tariff so that the line may be subsidised; then, that in certain eventualities (which include, we believe, a saving of four days in transit) the Indian mails are to go by the new route; and, lastly, that we are to use our good offices to secure for the line a terminus at Koweit. This last provision means that we are to introduce the whole world to the Persian Gulf, where we are, and ought to remain, paramount. The scheme reads better than at first from the point of view of British interests. But even so, in the present temper of the country, Ministers ought to be very chary of entering into any agreement, however plausible, with Germany, or, for the matter of that, with Russia.

The railway strike in Holland is at an end, and passengers may now cross freely by the Hook, a route which had suffered considerably. The boats ran regularly, but the trains were only kept going with difficulty, and chiefly by the aid of the military. The Dutch Government has shown great energy and promptitude in dealing with the situation. Moreover, the States General have passed the new strike laws, which, in addition to organising a railway brigade in the Army, impose the heaviest penalties on strikers yet known in Europe. Workmen who engage in the pastime of "picketing" their fellows may in future be sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Leaders of strike agitations may get as much as six years. *O si sic omnes!*

Since the publication of the figures of the Census attention has been frequently attracted to the curious state of things existing in Scotland. The fame of the Scot of old times was founded largely on this, that he was bred to hard work and the most frugal living. The typical Scot of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was pre-eminently a countryman brought up with the strictest regard to economy. It seems that this kind of Scotchman is disappearing; he is melting away from the Highlands and the rural Lowlands, to reappear in the backwoods of Canada and the Western States of America. On the other hand, the great Scottish towns, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen, are swelling past all recognition, so that the population of the whole country shows an abnormal growth over what it was at the previous Census. But these latter-day Scots are not the Scots of old who travelled and colonised and were found wherever human speech was to be heard; they are townsmen of the sort bred in our own provincial cities, Manchester, Liverpool, Newcastle, and the like. Those who stand by the ancient ways in "guid auld Scotland" are very much perturbed in their minds, and look forward with fear and trembling to a fall of what Mr. Gladstone called "the land o' the leal" from her high estate.

A correspondent writes: "With reference to your remarks on the growth of cancer, and the urgent necessity of finding a cure for that fell disease, I think it ought to be more generally known that a marvellous cure is said to have been effected in London recently. I am personally interested in having known the lady whose life has been so happily saved. In November two leading surgeons refused to operate on her for internal cancer. To-day she is walking about merrily, and apparently enjoying her former health. Needless to say, the method of cure adopted is American, although it was originally 'made in Germany.' It consists simply in the application of 'high frequency currents' of electricity. This is also the plan adopted by our American cousins for electrocuting criminals, the only difference being that, in the case of the cancer patient, the current is applied at *three times the strength* employed in electrocuting, with the result that, under these conditions, it cures instead of killing. The theory is that the current kills all the poisonous germs in the body. This is no fairy tale of science. A book on the subject has been published, and a short, unsatisfactory correspondence recently appeared in one of the London evening papers. But, as my informant says, our high-class 'stick-in-the-mud' doctors, as he called them, decline even to look at the new cure. And its authors dare not talk too much about it, lest they bring down on themselves the penalties that in this country await on doctors who advertise."

Mr. Kearley, M.P., said in the House of Commons last week that in round figures the value of the butter annually brought into the country is £20,500,000. Nearly one-third of it comes from Ireland, where the energetic leaders of the new Co-operative Dairy Movement have been able in a comparatively short space of time to obtain an important—perhaps the most important—place in the whole market. Denmark, New Zealand, and Canada all follow, and the useful fact to know about each is that the industry of dairying has been carefully nursed and helped by the Government. It is this that is giving the Colonies the pull over the Old Country. At the same time, those who comment on the fact should not forget that our farmers have facilities for disposing of their dairy produce greater than any of the Colonies. They supply the great towns with milk, and the prices obtained for it are not only higher than those which are got for butter, but, being paid in what is practically ready cash, constitute a quick turnover. Nor do we think that much good is to be done by encouraging our people to go in for factory-made butter; in a private dairy it will always be possible to make a much better article than can be turned out by machine, and here, as elsewhere, excellence is the great object.

A correspondent sends us the following: "Much has been written about the cruelty of the pole-trap, but the ordinary steel trap is just as cruel. On the evening of Easter Sunday I was walking in a pheasant covert adjoining a wild heath, when my eye caught sight of a black object fluttering on the side of a disused gravel-pit, and on approaching I discovered it to be a rook with its legs crushed and held fast by a rabbit-trap. Close by the trap was part of a rabbit that had evidently been placed there as bait. Votaries of horse and hound will not hesitate to answer why. I do not mention the name of the owner of the estate, because he is known to be an excellent sportsman who would not countenance anything of the kind, but the incident shows what a keeper will do to get a good head of pheasants. Quite apart from any question of vulpicide, the act was one of cruelty, for which he deserves punishment." We agree with our correspondent.

TWEED REVISITED.

WHEN Sir Walter Scott was dying, his son-in-law, Lockhart, opened the window in order that the last sound he should hear would be that which was dearest to him, the music of the Tweed. Every lover of the famous Border stream must know the sound, which has a particularly sweet and soothing effect, although its cause is prosaic enough, being the fact that the bed of the river in many parts of its course consists of loose gravel, and the water running over the stones produces a sort of crooning that is only comparable to the sighing of the wind among the trees. Long ago, when angling, this noise of running water seemed to enter into my mind like Vivien's charm "of woven paces and of waving arms," and, going back after a long interval, it was this more than anything that set one dreaming.

loses itself in the greater river. But further up it amply justifies Scott's description of the dark and sullen Till, especially as it winds in and out among the green meadows and round the old ruins of the castle that the House of Manners built. The proverb about it is almost too well known to need repetition:

"Tweed said to Till,
'What gars you rin so still?'
Till said to Tweed,
'Though ye rin wi' speed
And I rin slow,
Where ye droon yin man
I droon twa.'"

But if that be a true character of the river, it is, as it were, only



A. H. Robinson.

THE TWEED AT BERWICK.

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There is practically no change in the stream since Scott, as a little lame boy, played on its banks near Kelso.

Some day, perhaps, we shall show photographs of the beautiful upper course, where the tributaries, famous in Border legend, empty themselves into the river—the Yarrow, the Gala, and the Teviot. To-day we show only a few of the bridges on the lower course of the river. Photographs of the famous old bridge at Berwick-on-Tweed have more than once appeared in our pages, but we have never had one more beautiful than that now presented to our readers. On a previous occasion we pointed out that its beauty can best be seen on a fine summer morning, when beneath its dark arches the Tweed is flowing to the sea, and on the north bank rise up the red roofs and tall steeples of a fortress town, unguarded now except for the waters that encircle her walls.

One of the pleasantest walks in England is to follow the stream as far as one's legs will carry one in the direction of Kelso, and the southern or English side is preferable, because on the other the junction of the Whiteadder with the Tweed makes a long détour necessary. On the other side the path leads up among green meadows where the salmon-fishers have their sheilings, and it is no more than a Sabbath-day's journey to get as far as "Norham's castled steep." A little further on is the scarcely less historic Twizel, near which the deep and slow Till enters the river; not that the description applies particularly at this point, for the Till, which for many miles is a dark, deep, slow stream, launches out into a sparkling gaiety just before it

one expression of it, and Mr. Swinburne's exquisite description gives another and more attractive one:

"O lordly flow the Loire and Seine,
And loud the dark Durance;
But bonnier shine the braes of Tyne
Than a' the fields of France;
And the waves of Till that speak sae still
Gleam goodlier where they glance."

And the same poem contains an admirable sketch of the whole county of Northumberland in its last verse:

"We'll see nae mair the sea-banks fair,
And the sweet grey gleaming sky,
And the lordly strand of Northumberland,
And the goodly towers thereby;
And none shall know but the winds that blow
The graves wherein we lie."

Anyone standing at Etal Castle and looking over where the old bridge used to be to "dark Flodden," still crowned with oaks as it was when Scott visited it, and seeing behind the beautiful range of Cheviots, would fully sympathise with Mr. Swinburne's eulogy of the waves of Till.

From Twizel, up low-lying haugh and woodland, the road carries you to Coldstream. The bridge which we illustrate is a piece of good workmanship, but cannot be compared for beauty of design with that at Berwick. To me its interest lies chiefly



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COLDSTREAM BRIDGE.

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KELSO BRIDGE.

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in the fact that on the Scottish side there still stands a cottage, which in my young days was a small hostelry, and before that was a blacksmith's shop. This was the Gretna Green of the district, and there are farm labourers still living whose marriages were celebrated here. Very amusing, too, is it to hear their reminiscences. It does not appear that into the majority of these runaway matches the element of romance entered at all; they went to Coldstream because in the first place it was convenient, and in the second place it was cheap. In those old days farm labourers had scarcely any holidays—indeed, they have told me that Christmas Day was the only one in the year on which they were free. To some extent that holds good to-day, and a great many marriages are saved up for the annual fair or hiring, when they are celebrated at the Registrar's office. An older custom was to jog over to Coldstream on a Saturday afternoon, or very early in the morning, so that the couple who were only sweethearts before breakfast were man and wife afterwards. One scarcely understands why even the services of the blacksmith were necessary, because the ancient marriage law of Scotland was that if a man and woman declared themselves married before witnesses, that legally constituted them husband and wife.

Looking over the bridge at the Salmon Pass, down which the water flows in a continual rush, it is curious to recall the changes that have taken place in the population since the day when Sir Walter Scott sauntered about here and dreamed of Flodden, and the Scottish knights and nobles whose bones were left on that fatal field. The whole of the country-side is reminiscent of feud and foray. Every variety of Border stronghold may be studied here. There is the underground vault or keep, into which the cattle and sheep were driven when the slogan of the marauders was heard; there are little bastle towers, which had two or three men-at-arms for garrison; there are watch-towers and peel-towers, which were meant for more prolonged defence; and there are fine old castles, some, like that of Etal, in ruins, some, like that at Ford, added to and restored past all recognition, and others, like Chillingham, which still show what a Border fastness used to be.

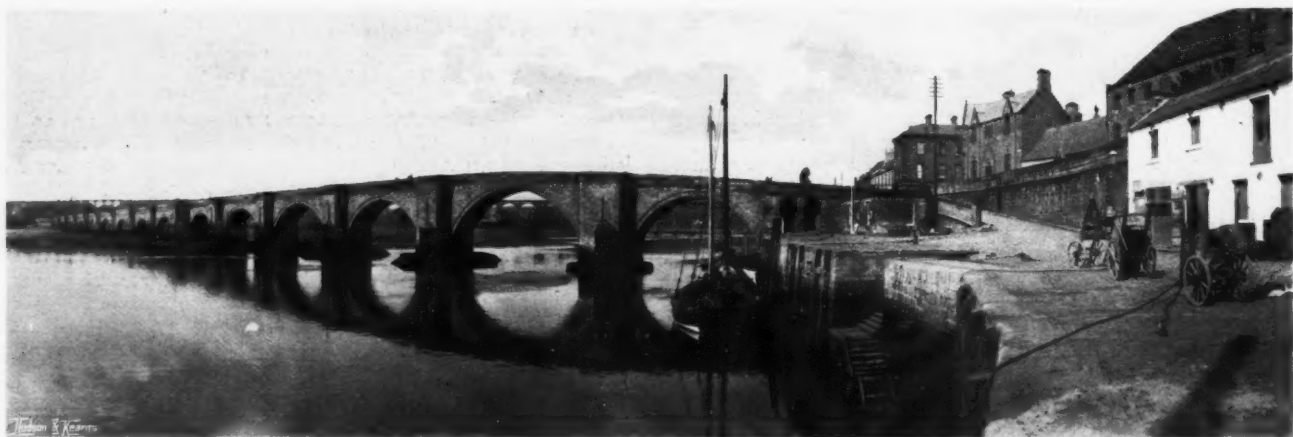
To anyone who has felt the romance of "old unhappy far-off things, and battles long ago," there could not be a district more suggestive of tradition and story. The very names of the places, such as "Encampment" and "Slainsfield," speak of martial times and stirring scenes, and even the field names are associated with battles and their heroes. And were there no associations whatever connected with it, the district is one of the most beautiful in England, although it is also one of the most

changeable, and a passing cloud transforms it from an appearance of prosperity and happiness into dreariness and melancholy. The reason probably is that the landscape is a combination of moorland and fertile field. The valley of the Tweed is itself one of thriving farms and woodland and covert, but away in the distance there is always the long blue range of the Cheviot Hills, which look down as though guarding the smiling fields below. People thereabouts believe that the south-west wind, which blows over them, derives a peculiar healthfulness from the fact, and it is always the most welcome of all the winds in Glendale and its neighbourhood.

Coldstream itself is an ancient and sleepy little town, that is supported by the surrounding agriculturists. It has no factory, and no employment for men except the salmon fishers, and probably for this reason is annually shrinking; tufts of grass are growing in the market-place, the market itself having long been discontinued. In this respect Coldstream resembles the other towns on the lower part of the Tweed, which are, practically speaking, Kelso and Berwick. No factory is carried on at any of them, and the river is quite unsuited to navigation, as its physical characteristic is breadth and shallowness. It is with difficulty, and only when the tide is full, that an ordinary rowing boat can be taken up as far as Norham.

THE TERRACE STAIRWAY
AT ST. CATHERINE'S . . .
. . . COURT, BATH.

THIS admirable garden picture will suggest something of the character of this romantically beautiful Somerset place to those who have not read an article we devoted to it some time ago, and this new picture will form an attractive addition to those already given. It would be hard to find anywhere in England a more delightful grouping of features than is seen upon the slope of the downs at St. Catherine's, where the quaint house, going back partly to pre-Reformation times, with many picturesque Tudor and Jacobean features added, stands adjacent to the church, while the whole declivity is laid out in a magnificent terrace garden, having all the features of enclosure and restraint which we like to find in such places. There are terraces worthy of Haddon, trees not to be excelled for beauty of form, others which are quaintness itself in their curious topiary shapes, grass stairways, and all other



A. H. Robinson.

BORDER BRIDGE, BERWICK-ON-TWEED.

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THE TERRACE STAIRWAY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

things that could make up a truly beautiful picture of English garden character. The church was rebuilt by Abbot Cantlow of Bath, about the year 1499, and the house at one time belonged to John Harington, father of the witty knight whose sallies were the amusement of the Court of Elizabeth. Elizabeth visited Sir John Harington at his Somerset seat in 1591, and thus added somewhat to its personal interests. As to its garden, we need but say again that it is admirable, that foliage and flowers are everywhere, that some trees and shrubs take their natural shapes, while others are like that wonderful clipped yew in our picture, that the foliage is not allowed to obtrude upon the house, and that in design, picturesqueness, and situation the gardens are all we could desire. The walls, gates, and iron grilles have a special charm, and the ascents up the slope to the tall elms at the top are adorned with architectural features and with radiant flower borders that make them as delightful as such fine garden features should be.

. . PASTELS . .

IN England pastels have not yet reached that height of popularity which they achieved on the Continent some ten or twelve years ago. Whilst we are still making absurd enquiries, in other countries the medium has been completely revived and established. The French pastelists' yearly exhibition at George Petit's gallery in the Rue de Sèze is one of the most popular and fashionable of the season. In London, to be sure, the Pastel Society is gaining ground, but it has not yet arrived at the popularity which it deserves. On this side of the Channel we are not fully awake to all the advantages of the medium. We are still impervious to its peculiarly tender and delicate colouring; to its wonderful brilliance in light keys and to the rich intensity of its darker notes. We do not appreciate the beautiful bloom of its surface qualities—for when properly used pastel has something of the velvety softness of the skin of a peach—nor have we yet realised that there are certain quick-changing effects in Nature, what Ruskin would have called "the evanescent passages of perfected beauty," which this medium, by the rapidity with which it can be handled, is peculiarly adapted to render. Then, again, sitting for a pastel portrait is a far less arduous undertaking than sitting for one in oils.

If we go to the root of the matter and try to discover the real obstacle to popularity in England, shall we not find it in a certain current idea that pastel is not permanent—that it slips or dusts off the canvas, or vanishes somehow in a cloud of smoke, like the witches in "Macbeth"? Nothing could well be more fallacious. Anyone in doubt as to the durability of the medium need but look at the variety of wonderfully preserved portraits of the eighteenth century that have been handed down to us. In a recent sale at Christie's some portraits by the celebrated pastelists, John Russell, R.A., changed hands. They were dated 1792 and 1798, and in all that time not one touch, not one colour, had altered; they were as fresh and blooming as on the day when they were first executed. The portraits by Hugh Hamilton, the celebrated Irish artist of the early part of the same century, are all in an equally good state of preservation. Perhaps their perfect condition is due to the fact that with this mode of expression no chemical action takes place when the picture is once completed. There is no oil to dry, and in doing so bubble, expand, or crack, as so frequently happens with oil painting. The pigments used for pastels are precisely the same as those used for oils, with this difference; with the former they are mixed with a dry, crumbling powder and rolled into little sticks; in this dry condition they are crushed on to the canvas or

paper. It is far easier to see pastels of the eighteenth century in France than it is in England, where most of the works by English masters are in the hands of private owners; but in the Louvre portraits may be seen by Rosalba Carriera, La Tour, Liotard, Chardin, Fragonard, and even by Russell—though neither the National Gallery nor South Kensington possesses any by this master.

Pastels were first used in Germany in the sixteenth century, but it was not until two centuries later, when Rosalba Carriera made herself famous throughout Europe by her brilliant performances, that they were looked upon as a serious mode of expression. In 1720 we hear of Rosalba in Paris being fêted by everyone. Between the intervals of balls and supper parties the ladies of the court clamoured to sit to her. She has left many sweet and delicate portraits of the most charming women of her day. But it remained for La Tour, the most celebrated of all pastelists, to establish the virility of the medium, and to raise it to the level of, and even to rivalry with painting. This he did with so much energy that, for a short time, the authorities of the Salon refused to admit pastels into their exhibitions. They were afraid that the public would grow disgusted with painting, seeing it beside these brilliant and wonderfully living portraits.

Little is known outside France of this great eighteenth century pastelists—of his power of rendering the race, type, even the very thoughts and subtlest characteristics, of his sitters, with a few powerful strokes of the crayon. Diderot, one of his most ardent admirers, has called him "un magicien," and, indeed, there seems to be magic in this faculty for creating, with a sheet of blue paper and a few pieces of chalk, living heads that, as you look, seem to detach themselves from the canvas and come towards you. La Tour was, more than any artist of his century, what the French call a *dessinateur physionomiste*. The Goncourts speak of him as the greatest, the profoundest draughtsman the French school has ever produced. Not only does he draw the physiognomy of the persons before him, but, in his more finished works, he renders the physiognomy of their milieu, of the surroundings in which they lived. In this he broke boldly from the traditions of Rigaud and Largillière, who were satisfied with the absurd allegories of the time, the heavy curtains and pompous colonnades which were the usual backgrounds of official portraits. La Tour had the courage to represent his sitters in the midst of their daily habits and occupations; thus the President Rieux is shown in the opulence of the magistracy, Mme. de Pompadour in the intimacy of her boudoir. In this portrait, the artist's most important work with respect to size and finish, the marquise is sitting holding a piece of music in her hand; her guitar is thrown on the sofa close by, the strings still vibrating, and on the table near are her favourite books, elegantly bound—"The Henriade," the third volume of "L'Esprit des Lois," and the fourth of the "Encyclopædia." In this pastel all La Tour's ambitions as a portraitist can be traced. By the sheet of music he represents the virtuoso; in the volume of "Pierres Gravées," and in the portfolio containing the engraved works of Mme. de Pompadour, and also by the print on the floor, at the foot of which can be read "Pompadour sculptist," he denotes her taste for and actual practice of the art of engraving. In the absent expression of the eyes and in the half smile, as if listening for the closing of some inner door, he conveys her look of hopeful expectancy for the King's visit. These qualities all combine in giving a most interesting likeness of the favourite, and at the same time they show to what a degree of technical perfection La Tour could carry the art. This work can still be seen in an excellent state of preservation in the Louvre, but with this and a very few exceptions, the town of Saint Quentin holds all that is most characteristic of La Tour's works. To this provincial town, the artist's birthplace, his brother left the famous collection of portraits and *préparations*, as some of them are called. In it the whole of the eighteenth century seems to pass in review. Here may be seen pastels of the King, the Queen, the Dauphin, Mme. de Pompadour, the Conte de Saxe, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, d'Alembert, the Camargo, and Mlle. Fel of the Opera, who inspired Grimm with such a hopeless passion and who was the artist's dearest family. E. S. S.

PLANTING COVERTS FOR GAME.

By H. UPCHER.

AT the present time, when the continued agricultural depression has caused land values to fall very much below their former prices, the landlord is often obliged to let the shooting on his property, and the price he gets for this shooting depends very much on the "bags" that have been made in former years. Now that so many shootings are in the market, the would-be shooting tenant looks carefully round before he settles which estate he will hire. Often his mind is finally made up by the suitability or otherwise of the coverts for holding a large head of pheasants. With land which can only be let at the present low prices for farming purposes, it is by no means a bad investment for the landlord to plant certain portions of his property. The trees will always be growing into money, and the present value of the shooting will be materially increased by judiciously selecting the sites for the new plantations. Owners therefore would do well before planting to consider carefully what would be the best size, shape, and position for a new covert from the shooting point of view. Small coverts are by far the most convenient. The keeper can show his birds much better, and far fewer beaters are required, which save expense and trouble. In large woods the army of "stops" is a nuisance both to keeper and guns. The former is never sure that each man or boy has remained where he was placed; the latter never certain when a small boy's head is going to appear amongst the undergrowth. Also, it is much easier to make pheasants fly well when the guns can be placed in the

open between two coverts than when they have to stand on rides in the large woods. A good plan in the latter case is for a substantial clearing to be made. It requires more birds, too, to make a show in a large wood, and it is harder to keep down the vermin. Let us then take it for granted that we are going to plant small coverts—we will consider belts later. A useful size is from four to six acres. It is surprising what a large number of pheasants can be kept in a six-acre covert by a keeper who knows his business. The shape must necessarily depend somewhat on the formation of the ground and the existing fences and surroundings. But, speaking generally, as near as possible an oblong will be found the best shape. It is possible to shoot a covert of this shape with fewer guns and fewer beaters, which is often an advantage. The house may not be able to accommodate more than a certain number of guns, or perhaps beaters are difficult to get. If this is so, the keeper may be glad to take anyone who comes along. On these occasions there is sure to be one or more of the poaching fraternity present. Unless he is watched pretty carefully he will go off at the end of the day with a pheasant or a rabbit or two in his pocket, and very likely will have hidden some more under some leaves or in some place where he thinks they will be safe till he can return under cover of dark and carry off his spoil.

But to return to our subject. A very few guns can command an oblong covert. As soon as the beaters begin to rattle their

sticks at one end the pheasants will make for the other, running amongst the undergrowth. Very few will go out at the sides, and almost every bird can be made to pass over the guns.

The position of these coverts is the next question. If by any chance there is already existing a large covert, the difficulty of selecting sites for the small coverts is in part removed; and for this reason—the small coverts can be placed round the big covert. The distance away will depend on the formation of the ground. But it is only necessary to place these coverts just so far away as to give the pheasants room to take a good flight before reaching the next. Three hundred yards is a good all-round figure to mention, but the exact distance can only be determined on the spot. If these small coverts are planted at intervals round the big one, it will be found that it is hardly necessary to shoot the big covert at all, provided, of course, that the keeper feeds judiciously in the small coverts as well as in the big one. Especially will this be the case if the land round the small coverts is under the plough. The big covert can then become a sort of sanctuary, to be shot through about once a year, while the small coverts can be shot through frequently, and will always be found to have pheasants in them, thus providing sport all through the season. Should there, however, be no big central covert, it is a good plan to plant one of the small ones as a centre and the others at intervals round it. Then one can always be driving birds homewards and towards the centre, whether the centre be left as a sanctuary or no. If the landlord is shooting his own land, he will find it a great help to keep his birds at home—provided he has the land in hand—if he sows a field next one of his coverts with rye or mustard, and lets it stand. If sown at the proper time either of these will make grand cover. Some estates, however, lend themselves more to belts than to small coverts such as described above. In a bleak open country these belts are very successful. Not only will they hold large quantities of pheasants, but they are most useful for partridge driving. Partridge driving over them is a most delightful form of sport. Belts have been most successful on several estates on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk. The value of land in some of this district

force of the wind and so making the country warmer. Birds like to bask in the sun on the lee side of a hedge or covert, and partridges and pheasants nest freely in belts. When laying out an estate for belts, it is best to try and arrange so that the belts form the four sides of a square as nearly as possible. As many squares can be made as the owner likes.

Next comes the important task, after selecting the sites of



W. A. Rouch.

AN IDEAL BELT.

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the coverts or belts, of determining what trees will suit best. This, of course, depends a good deal on the soil; but what we want chiefly is to find the trees that will give game protection in the shortest time. The trees that will answer our purpose, then, on almost any soil, by quickly becoming thick enough to hold pheasants, are a mixture of spruce fir, Scotch fir, silver fir, and larch. But it is always well to look to the future; so amongst these trees there should always be a good percentage of oak, Spanish chestnut, and beech. Acorns, chestnuts, and beech nuts are much appreciated by game, and they will stray miles from home to obtain them. Of course it will be some years before these trees will bear fruit, but that cannot be helped. It is advisable to plant the trees fairly close and to plant them small. By being close together they protect one another from the wind. It is a good plan to plant only half the piece to begin with. Plough up the other half and put in rye or mustard. In three years the trees will have grown so much that half of them may be moved, and these will do to put into the half that has

been left. Trees grow much faster if the ground is well trenched, but this, of course, adds very much to the expense. If the ground is not trenched, good large holes should be dug. A useful distance apart for the holes is 3ft. from the centre of one hole to the centre of the next. The trees should be from 1ft. 6in. to 2ft. high. The small trees seem to get hold quicker and grow faster than larger ones, and, of course, are much cheaper. They can be purchased at from £1 per 1,000. It is as well to get the trees from the nearest nurseryman, as if they are some days in a railway truck they are apt to get heated, and sometimes never get over it. Four thousand eight hundred and forty trees will be required to plant an acre if placed 3ft. apart. The late autumn and early winter is the best time to plant in most districts. In a few years a large number



W. A. Rouch.

THE RESULT OF JUDICIOUS PLANTING OF COVERTS.

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is practically nil from an agricultural point of view. These belts should be from thirty to forty yards wide—never less than thirty. A good wide space should be left where one belt meets another, to give the pheasants plenty of room to fly from one belt to the next, otherwise they will keep very low, only just skimming across, and so offering very poor shots to the guns. Belts planted across an open country help game, too, by breaking the

of poles can be cut out of these plantations, and they are always marketable if not required by the owner on his estate for fencing and so forth.

If there are many rabbits or hares, wire netting must be used to protect the trees; but it is bad stuff for game, and if it can possibly be avoided, so much the better. The rabbit gives a lot of fun to the shooter, but he is a demon amongst young

trees. And the hare is nearly as bad. It seems to give hares great satisfaction to bite off the leading shoots of young larch and Scotch. They cut the shoots off as clean as if they used a sharp knife. Nothing improves the look of these coverts more than a nice fence round. No fence looks better than one of spruce or Scotch fir, and no fence is warmer. These fences, of course, have to be clipped; but they well repay careful looking after. A broad ride should be left down the middle of each covert, but should not come quite through to each end, otherwise anyone passing the covert can see from end to end, and game do not like to be watched. Some owners may prefer to make these coverts entirely of oak. Oak coverts are splendid for pheasants, and, with hazel undergrowth, pay well in many districts. But oak takes a long while to grow. This difficulty, however, can be got over by planting larch, Scotch, and spruce with the oak as nurses. This mixture of trees will make cover much quicker than oak alone, and will help to draw the oak up. The coniferous trees can be cut away when they have done their duty, and be turned into money. It will be soon enough to plant hazel, if desired, when these have been cut out. Pheasants do well in woods with hazel undergrowth, but they do not seem to care for too thick a covert. They like one where they can walk about with comfort and hunt for natural food. On land where osiers will grow a good financial return may be made by planting osier-beds, if sets from good osiers are obtained in the first instance. Osiers cost very little to plant, grow very quickly, practically making a covert in two years, and are particularly liked by pheasants. For some reason best known to themselves, pheasants dearly love an osier carr. Advice and facts as to osier

planting are printed in a pamphlet by the Agricultural Department. Rabbits, too, are very fond of osiers, and are very destructive to them in sharp weather. The same kind of trees will do for belts as for the small coverts, and a hedge of spruce, Scotch, or evergreen privet is always a help, as it makes them so much warmer. In low-lying, damp places a mixture of alders, willows, and osiers will make a splendid pheasant covert, but a few oak and spruce should always be put in as well. Flushing corners can either be made artificially or by planting for the purpose. Box and the evergreen privet are both good, and snowberry is successful in some districts. Rhododendrons, too, are used occasionally, and it is said in their favour that birds come very steadily out of them, but pheasants rarely go into them unless driven in. Another thing in favour of rhododendrons is that rabbits do not seem to care about biting them. But they will not grow everywhere. If the planter is a stranger to the district, a good look round the neighbourhood should be taken before beginning, to see what kind of trees grow best in that particular soil. By so doing, much money, time, and disappointment may be saved. By means of carefully-arranged belts and small coverts the game-carrying capacity of an estate can be enormously increased, and at a comparatively small initial outlay. I venture to prophesy that anyone who experiments by planting one or two small belts or coverts will very soon be hard at work putting in more.

The accompanying illustrations have already appeared in COUNTRY LIFE, but they are republished because one shows how a belt of old trees may be made an ideal covert, and the other the result of careful planting on a small estate.

THE CENSUS OF SMALL BIRDS.

THERE is a sentence rather apt to arrest the attention in the ornithological chapter of the "Victorian History of the County of Hampshire," of which the first volume only, at the date of writing, has been published to its subscribers. The passage in question is under the head of the Dartford warbler, of which the writer says that it is one of the very few of our smaller birds whose numbers have decreased during the last half century. While declaring ourselves unreservedly on the side of the humanitarians who wish to preserve all birds to the extreme limit of the interests of agricultural pursuits, we may value accuracy of statement on this subject as on others, especially if the truth is found, this once, at all events, to be in accordance with our earnest wishes.



T. A. Metcalfe. STARLING FEEDING YOUNG.

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Metcalfe. BLUE TIT AT NESTING-HOLE. Copyright

The Dartford warblers, whose fortunes are the special occasion of the remark just noticed, would be almost certainly, and quite naturally, less numerous than of old; for this bird is extremely partial in its choice of residence, and will inhabit exclusively thickets of furze. And since this is the kind of cover that on the whole is disappearing before the advance of civilisation, it is only to be expected that its tenants will become less numerous. The satisfactory point, however, is that it is possible to mention the Dartford warbler as a striking exception, and really as one of those exceptions that go to prove the rule, for there is, as we have seen, a particular cause for its exceptional decrease. Other birds like furze coverts, but none other are so particular as to live nowhere else.

The census of bird population is not an easy one to take



Metcalfe. GREAT TIT AT NESTING-HOLE. Copyright

We cannot get it put down with the tolerable exactitude possible in the case of a city full of human inhabitants. But there are certain kinds of birds of which the increase is so considerable and evident that a very moderate degree of intelligent observation must establish it. It is especially easy to be seen in the case of birds whose absolute numbers are still rather few, such as the hawfinches.

There was a time when, even in the south-eastern shires which, perhaps, they frequent most, their eggs were looked on as quite a prize for the collection. That hardly can be said to be the case now. In one of Lord Lilford's letters—to Mr. Meade-Waldo, I think, but I have not Mr. Trevor-Battye's book by me as I write—he mentions that the hawfinches certainly are increasing in that part of the world. I find the birds not uncommon in parts of Wales. In Hampshire, indeed everywhere, the story is the same—hawfinches greatly increasing. Of course they are very local birds, even in districts where they abound. One garden or orchard will be frequented by hawfinches, another garden or orchard close by, and to all appearance equally inviting, never will be visited. The reason is known only to the hawfinches themselves. There is not the same explanation ready to hand in their case such as accounts for the Dartford warblers' fewer numbers; they have not any very clearly marked affection for a particular kind of cover. They have a very clearly marked affection for buds of trees, especially of fruit trees, and this being so, the undoubted increase in their numbers is not contemplated with unalloyed satisfaction by the fruit-grower. They are elusive little birds, though not wild, having a trick of quick concealment in thick cover that probably makes their numbers appear less than they really are.

Another delightful little bird, of manners rather similar to the hawfinches, and attached to them by family ties, is the bullfinch. He, too, is a persistent pecker of the fruit-tree buds, and his numbers also show a marked increase. Though never so scarce as the hawfinches, the bullfinches used to be relatively uncommon, but now they

are constantly to be seen, not in pairs only—it is seldom that you will find them singly—but in little parties of anything from six to a dozen. With their fondness for the buds of fruit trees, it is no wonder that they should frequent a country of orchards, especially if it also happens to abound in the thick bosage in which they like to rest. In these little bands they will go about from orchard to orchard, remaining so long as they are undisturbed, but very ready to be off to their next favourable feeding-place as soon as they are evicted. Intermittent persecution has made them extremely well "acquainted with the nature" of a gun, to parody the police-court phraseology, and it is not easy to get a shot at them, although they may be tame enough in the presence of an unarmed man. The necessity of firing at them occasionally, even if it be only for the purpose of frightening them away rather than of killing them, is not wholly agreeable, for they are charmingly pretty little people, with a sweet, although not a powerful, song.

Another bird of relative scarcity whose numbers are on the increase is the nuthatch, and in his case we may regard the growing population with unreserved satisfaction. Sometimes in the hard weather he will come down from his tapping—wood-pecker fashion—on the trees to pick a share of the crumbs of charity thrown out for the sparrows and others; but as a rule he confines his attention to the trees, searching them for insects, running up and down the trunks in his own prehensile way, and only occasionally coming down to the ground and pecking there as if to see whether he has dropped anything. In shape and size the nuthatch is so like the kingfisher, and in colouring, too, so similar to a kingfisher of much-washed-out hue, that it is curious the resemblance has not been noticed more often.

The nuthatch makes his home in the hollow of a decayed trunk, and it is not a little singular that the bird which of all our common kinds shows the most notable increase of recent years, the starling, chooses by preference the same kind of locality for its nesting-place. The two cases considered together suggest as an explanation that the housing accommodation affected by both of them equally may have increased; but the point of fact is not generally noticeable, I think, that we have very many more hollow trees, with convenient holes of entry, than we used to have. We must seek some other explanation, and for my own part I must confess that I have no very satisfactory one to offer. But of the actual fact of the increase of the starling there can be no manner of doubt, and this is not a statement that is true of one part of the country only. It seems to be fairly universal. Nor on the whole is it all to be regretted. The starling is a shameless cherry thief, that is by far the most grievous of his offences. At the cherry-ripe time the undefended trees will be black with his hosts, for they appear black at a little distance, especially in the very early morning, for breakfast seems to be the starling's best meal, and it is hardly possible to get up early enough to scare him off. He will be there with the dawn. But for the rest of the year the starling, I think, is the farmer's and gardener's friend, and the good that he does far outweighs the evil, which is more than can be said for every one of us. Some more or less remote cousins of the starling, the jackdaw and the rook, whose numbers certainly are on the up grade, are not to be mentioned so favourably. If the starling is the farmer's friend, the rook is no less surely his enemy. The increase of the rook does not



T. A. Metcalfe.

SKYLARK FEEDING YOUNG.

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seem to be nearly so universal as that of the starling. In some parts of the country his numbers are stationary, but in others he is a real pest. The jackdaw resembles him in habits of feeding, though more akin to the starling as regards his choice of nesting-places in hollow trees and crannies; and here and there both rooks and jackdaws have learnt, in the years of drought, to become inveterate egg-stealers, partridges' nests

attracting their especial attention. It may be said that we are travelling now beyond the lists of what we in Great Britain mean by "small birds," and perhaps it is a just criticism. The larger birds, as a rule, especially of the raptorial kind, are diminishing, as the country gets more and more thickly populated, and gamekeepers wage war, with little discrimination, on all their species. One very fine bird, of the larger kind, that is distinctly more common than it was is the great crested grebe. On many sheets of water in the country a pair or more of them are constantly seen, and as they are beautiful birds, and not good for the table, it is the interest of all who wish to add to the attractions of their ornamental waters to give them sanctuary. As a rule our wildfowl are not at all on the increase; but the general decrease in their numbers has received some check of late, owing to the growing and extending practice of rearing and encouraging "tame wild ducks," as they are called. The mallard population is, perhaps, fairly well kept up by this assistance, and the golden-eye ducks are likewise well maintained; but most of the wildfowl are gradually deserting us as human population becomes more dense and the marshy districts are drained. Snipe and woodcock, especially the latter, hold rather a peculiar place in the census, for while it is sure that they nest with us more numerous than they did, it is equally sure that their numbers in the shooting season are not what they were. The explanation of this seeming contradiction is that the nesting birds go South after their domestic business is over, while the birds that we find in the shooting season have migrated from the North. As a rule none of those that nest with us will remain. It is a well-established fact, to be remembered in this connection, that all migrating birds nest at the northern limit of their migration. The contradiction, therefore, is less astonishing than it seems at first, although the reasons that govern the distribution of these two kinds at the different seasons are not easily found.

On the whole, it is to be realised that in spite of all that we hear of the depredations of the bird-catcher, of the birds'-nesting boy, of the unlicensed gunner, and the rest of the much-maligned crew, the fact is that our avine population is larger than it used to be. The motives of



T. A. Metcalfe.

SKYLARK ON NEST.

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told by a keen Kentish ornithologist that in the year of the Franco-Prussian War the south-eastern counties were visited by very unusual numbers of buzzards and other birds of the raptorial kinds, and it was inferred that they were frightened from their usual haunts by the sound of firing. That is a plausible and simple explanation, and it may have the advantage of being the true one; but it is not always that an explanation comes so ready to hand.

No doubt the bird-catchers and the rest of them do much ill in making their unfortunate captives, but their operations are restricted; recent legislation has controlled them, and in any case the areas that they ranged over were not unlimited. In certain parts they may have affected very considerably the numbers of certain birds, such as skylarks and goldfinches, but the range of the birds was always more extensive than the range of their captors, and there were many districts that virtually were sanctuaries for them. Special causes are affecting the distribution of certain kinds of birds. There was at one time a fear that the goldfinch would be almost exterminated. As land was

cultivated, the thistle seeds in which these dear little birds so much delight became less plentiful. Now, land has gone back from cultivation in some counties, and the goldfinches have increased again accordingly. The system of driving partridges, more and more widely adopted, has contributed to a great general increase in their numbers, tending, as the driving does, to the infusion of fresh blood and to the killing of the old birds, instead of the young ones, that were the first and most frequent victims of the old-fashioned style. The same cause is probably the explanation of the far more wide distribution of the French partridge within the last decade.

On the whole, the bird-lover may take comfort that the kinds in which he takes a special delight—the small birds and songsters—have very generally increased, and are increasing. The causes, as we have seen, of avine distribution are usually not too easy to discern. We may fairly suppose that the recent legislation, both that which is directly aimed at the protection of birds, and that which works to the same end by compelling boys to attend school, has counted for something; but probably the spread of human population has counted for a great deal more. It is a mistake to suppose that the dense woodlands are a



AN ANGRY SPARROW-HAWK. Copyright

favourite haunt of small birds. As a rule, such places are rather conspicuous for the absence of bird life; a few tits and goldcrests picking about among the trees are the most frequent specimens of the avine race, and even they are not numerous. The multiplication of small country houses, villa gardens, and so on, at the expense of woodland and waste heath, is very much in the favour of the small birds. The cultivation of the ground brings insect food to their reach, the gardens supply them with opportunities for small pilferings, the farm fields and the various crops all contribute to their meals, and there is still plenty over for the farmer, the villa gardener, or the landed

proprietor. The satisfaction of being able to think that England is becoming more and more the home of singing birds may very far outweigh the small cost of the depredations inflicted by the majority of our feathered friends. There are one or two kinds, notably the rook, as we have seen already, and the all too ubiquitous sparrow, whose numbers are immense, and their mischief greater than their merits, but these are the exceptions to the rule. As a rule, our most agreeable friends among the birds are useful, no less than they are agreeable, and to many of us it may be a pleasant surprise to learn that their numbers are distinctly on the increase.

WON ON THE EBB.

"AND when do 'ee think of selling her, Mr. Eagle?"

"'Bout Easter, Jack, I reckon. I shall sail her down channel to the wedding of a nephew of mine as be going to get himself married in April—All Fools' Day, or somewhere near it, I reckon, and a 'ppropriate time for it, too—and then she be thine for the forty pound, my lad, and she's a vessel what's worth it."

"Well, I reckon I'll be able to find that, if I do well with the wildfowlin' through the winter. 'Tis wonderful how a frost do bring the wildfowl of a sharp winter, bean't it, Mr. Eagle? D'ye see that bank there beyond the turn in the 'pill'? I've seen the ducks a-huddlin' like sheep clean from the bridge here to that bank after a week of frost. Those be the times!"

"Aye, lad, there's always summat new in the river, and that's what makes a man so set on it, I count. I never could abide them farms, with their turmut diggin' and cider-makin', and stupid-lookin' cows, and that. And that's why I'd rather thee had the boat, my lad, though there's plenty of young fellows about the farm as would give a bigger price for her. Thinks I whenever I sees one of them, by the cows thou wast born, and by cows thou'dst better stick, by the looks of 'ee. Thou'rt no lad for the Pride of Severn, thinks I. But she'd not be likely to bide the Pride of Severn either, would she, Jack? More likely the Pride of Susan, or summat like that, my lad, eh?"

The old man's eye twinkled inquisitively. "Plenty o' time to see about that," said Jack immovably, gazing ahead of him at the shore birds feeding on the flats. From beneath the bridge on which the two were leaning a thin stream of water ran down between high wet banks to the broad channel of the river lying outspread before them in the ebb, with its yellow sands and long grey ooze-beds shimmering in the haze of a September sun. The uncovered banks were whispering in the stillness with the stir of innumerable minute forms of life, and far away from over the water came the bark of a distant sheepdog.

"'Tis still weather," said old Eagle at last. "Well, Pride of Severn or Pride of Susan, she be there for sale come Easter, and I'd like thee to have her. But she's worth every penny of forty pound, is that there boat of mine."

With his head full of this great negotiation, Jack Beard walked homewards along the green sea wall that kept out the waters of the river in times of flood and storm. "Home" was a white wind-beaten house crouched beneath the wall by a chain of lonely pools, haunted by the wildfowl in winter, and here he had lived alone for several years past, somewhat to the wonder of the village gossips but to his own complete satisfaction. Though neither unsociable nor unpopular, he had no near relations to keep him in the village, and to spend his time by the side of the river when he was not actually upon it had an even stronger fascination for him than for the rest of the men and lads who, like old Eagle, always felt drawn to the water-side and away from the quiet life of the farms. And to this white house by the pools where the mallard bred he hoped one day to bring home the subject of old Eagle's sly suggestion about the change in the name of his vessel, for the old man had all the typical villager's knowledge of his neighbour's doings, and Jack's visits for a year or more to Slade Farm, where Susan Strange was in service, had been marked by even less than the usual rustic diplomacy.

Next day being Sunday, Jack Beard duly dressed himself in his best and most uncomfortable suit of clothes, and betook himself churchwards to tell Susan of his new hopes and plans. But in spite of this special interest, and the stimulating spectacle of Susan's Sunday hat in a pew far up the aisle, the influences of the sermon and a bumble-bee droning in a window proved together too much for him. Even the shocks to his professional sense conveyed by the heraldic type of vessel which, on the authority of the window with the bee in it, was formerly in vogue upon the Sea of Galilee, lost their power at last, and he fell fast asleep.

"Aye, I know I did then," he said, when Susan took him to task as they went together down the hill; "'twas that great dumbledore as did it, buzzin' when it should ha' been 'tending to the sermon."

"You should ha' been!" said Susan, with a great air of

severity. "That's what comes o' living out there by them nasty ponds o' yours. Folks 'ud think you was a wild creature, living out there alone with never so much as a scrap o' flower garden. When the water be a-swirlin' in front o' the door there, it be a mercy as it don't clean overflow 'ee."

"Severn don't do that now, my lass. Them times is gone. But which house in the parish would 'ee like me to have, eh? Only got to say the word, and of course everyone would shift for I."

"Thou silly!" said Susan, smiling. "I suppose thou'll always bide alone out there, like a great Jack-hern?"

"Nay, my lass!" burst out Jack suddenly; "I'll not bide out there, nor yet alone, if thou'll have me, and that's what I wanted to say to thee. Susan, my lass, if I do leave the Brick-pools at Easter, wilt thou leave Slade Farm? Aye, my lass—that'll be the time, won't it, now? See, I've spoken with Oliver Eagle, and he be going to sell the Pride of Severn; and if I can get the rest of the money together to buy her, why should you and me wait? Aye, Susan; given it's a good winter with the wildfowl, we'll be married at Easter, with a new house, if 'ee do want it, and yonder boat as well!"

He spoke rapidly, with a kindled eye. They had reached the tiny wharf at the head of the village "pill," where the Pride of Severn was straining at her moorings in the eddying flood tide. Susan said nothing, but Jack wanted no answer as she clung closer to his arm, and before his eye his sweetheart, the grey banks of the stream, and the stout, grimy old ketch, seemed all transfigured in the golden September sunshine. It was a happy parting there on the bridge a little while later, with Susan turning to smile at him from the bend in the road, and the Pride of Severn poking her bowsprit up on the wall beside him for all the world like a dog that welcomed its new master.

But autumn deepened into winter, the reeds in the pools of the old brickfields died down into russet swathes, and the wildfowl did not come. Week after week the weather remained mild and open, and Jack watched night after night in vain for the crisp touch in the air at sunset and the veer in the wind that promised the longed-for frosts. His pools and the miles of shore-flats held hardly anything better worth powder than the flocks of grey-winged gulls that came up in the boisterous weather from the south-west, and Jack's heart grew heavy and despondent. One dark afternoon in February he was tramping home along the sea wall, from stalking the wary curlew on the flats, when he met one of the farmer's sons of the village driving in his cattle from the pastures outside the wall.

"The water'll be high afore morning, I count, Jack," he cried, while his heifers lumbered over the bank. "'Tis a spring tide to-night, and it do look like wind. Beautiful open weather, bean't it, for sure? Proper farmers' weather, I calls it, when the beasts can find their own keep right through to February."

"Aye, 'tis farmers' weather, sure enough," said Jack drily; "I'd like to see some frosts myself."

"Ah, 'twould take a power o' different weather to please all of us, wouldn't it?" the young man blundered on, with a laugh which showed that, for his part, he was well enough pleased at present. "Each has his turn, like sheep at shearin'."

Just though these moral reflections might be, they were not much to Jack's taste. "Mind, Charley," he cried, "thy beasts'll be in Severn if thou don't stop them."

Two or three of the heifers had provided a timely interruption by straying back towards the mud-flats, and by the time their owner had turned to stop them were making direct for the neighbourhood of the Atlantic Ocean at a heavy canter.

"Drat they young beasts," gasped Charles, when he had got them safely to landward of the bank again; "they do fairly drive a man wild. I be pretty nigh sick o' farm work altogether, and main glad I be goin' to quit it."

"Going to quit it, be you?" said Jack.

"Aye, for most o' the time, that's to say. I be goin' to try the coastin' trade. Goin' to buy a boat."

"Aye. Where from?" said Jack, calmly.

"From old Oliver Eagle, that's where," Charles answered communicatively. "The Pride of Severn, 'ee do know. He be goin' to sell her afore along, and I've been a-talkin' it over with

him already once or twice. She's a bit oldish, but I count she'll last for awhile yet. Well, if I don't catch up with them beasts, they'll be in four parishes afore night."

As he trudged off whistling behind his heifers, a wild desire seized Jack, for a moment, to take him and throw him into the ditch by the side of the track. For the first time in his life he was stung with the bitterness of poverty; why should Charley Hart, a fellow no stronger than he was, no more hard-working, no cleverer, be able to throw down his money for a mere whim and snatch away the vessel from him, on gaining which he had staked his whole happiness? He had hoped after what old Eagle had said to him that autumn day by the river that if he failed to get together the money by Easter the old man would be ready to keep the *Pride of Severn* for a few months more, but now that hope was gone. As he gazed into the banked sunset sky and the mild gusts met his cheek, he clenched his fists in despair. It was "farmers' weather" indeed. The stars in their courses seemed against him.

At midnight came the gale. Even in his sleep Jack's sea-going sense was alive to every change in the voice of winds and waves, and it was without surprise that, waking before morning, he found the chimney howling and the barred windows jarring savagely in the grip of a wild south-westerly blast. The night was still black, and he turned and slept again, waking when, beyond his unshuttered windows to landward, the first melancholy gleam of a winter's dawn was beginning to lift the upper from the under darkness. He was always soon astir on mornings of change in the river, and was out of doors before full daylight. As he unbarred the door he found the wind was dropping fast with daybreak, but the harsh roar of the ebb tide rushing through the reefs and narrows of the river-channel sounded at his very ear. That fierce noise, shriller and keener than the roar of breakers on a sea-beach, always stirred his blood, and now as he climbed to the crest of the sea-wall and met the salt wind in the grey morning light he felt an exhilaration like the joy of battle. After scanning the grey ebbing waters to windward for a few moments, he turned, and then stood rooted to the spot. A furlong up stream a bare-poled vessel, black, deserted, and trailing an unknotted cable, came helplessly rolling down the ebb. A second glance was certainty. It was the *Pride of Severn*, adrift and making straight for the English Stones, the black reefs showing their jagged edges above the ebb a mile down stream. Jack felt a savage joy, and his eye lit up with triumph. Though he himself had lost her, his rival might whistle for the *Pride of Severn* now—"Oldish," he had said, "but good enough to last him awhile yet." "Ah, Charles," he cried aloud, slapping his leg in savage glee, "where's thy boat now? Where's thy new boat now, my man?"

The ugly sound of his own voice called him to himself again. With a strong revulsion of feeling he remembered who, after all, was still the boat's owner, and cursed himself for standing grinning there and watching old Oliver Eagle's vessel drift to destruction before his eyes. Half a mile down stream, in a narrow "pill" he knew a small rowing-boat was kept moored, and the next minute he was running down the bank as fast as he could put foot to ground, and by the time the *Pride of Severn* came drifting past the mouth of the little creek he was afloat and intent on salvage. In the swift tideway he well knew it was impossible to board her, but presently the current carried her, as he hoped, into the slacker water among a network of sandy channels, and there as she paused a moment in an eddy he took his painter in his teeth, swung himself up by the bowsprit, and leapt on board. In a moment more the anchor plunged deep into the sands, and, breathlessly but in triumph, Jack felt the hawser jerk as it held ground, and saw the grey waters hurrying swiftly past him to where a few hundred yards down stream they whitened into seething foam on the long black edges of the dreaded English Stones.

At the turn of the tide he hoisted sail, and brought the *Pride of Severn* back to the village "pill," but moored her in the lower reaches and made his way to land. Now that the vessel lay safe in harbour, and his work in saving her was past, he felt as if he had seen the last of her for ever, and set out to find old Eagle with a heavy heart. As he expected, he did not have long to look for him. The old man was striding along the bank from the village in a pair of great sea-boots and pouring a torrent of abuse at a scared and collapsed-looking boy, who plainly took Jack's approach in the light of a respite, momentary though it might be, from total obliteration.

"Seen her, you do say? Safe? Safe? That's good. Ah, thou young gallows-bird, would thou dare grin at me? Grin at me again, and I'll twis' thy head clean off! That's good news, Jack, my lad; where is she then? Moored in the 'pill,' eh? Well, how did she come there, then? Not by herself, I'll warrant!"

Jack gave the outlines of the morning's work in a few unwilling sentences, and by the time he had taken it in, the old man's eye, except when it chanced to fall on the unobtrusive person of his nephew, had regained its usual shrewd twinkle of contentment.

"Well, lad, it was a smart bit o' work. Right smart bit o' work, it was. Aye, it'll be great news for Charley Hart."

Jack's brow darkened, but he tramped along the bank in silence.

"Aye, rare news for Charley Hart; I make no doubt o' that. Uncommon pleased he'll be about it, or I'm mistook."

"I reckon I wouldn't have troubled to do it for Charley Hart," said Jack, with a short laugh. "I shouldn't feel no call to save property for he. Once the boat be his and not yours, I coud she can drive to blazes afore I'll stir."

Old Eagle looked at him queerly. "Eh, eh, what's forrard? What's the matter with Charley Hart?"

"Oh, nought. 'Ceptin' that them is lucky men as have got money they never earned to chuck about on what they don't rightly want."

Eagle turned suddenly upon the boy in the rear. "Clear out of this. What be slinking there for, you young weasel?" he shouted. And the boy vanished in a spasm.

The old man took a few steps in silence.

"Come Easter, said I to thee, my lad, I'll sell thee the *Pride of Severn*. Well, dost thou want to back out?"

Jack stared at his bushy eyebrows, fairly puzzled. "No; nor I. But Charley Hart told me. Why, he said he'd put in an offer and had got her promised to 'un. And I can't get the forty pound."

Old Eagle's eyebrows half hid his sharp grey eyes. "How much hast thou, then?" he said.

"Seven-and-twenty."

"That's enough, Jack. That's quite enough." The eyebrows sprang up suddenly, and a heavy hand slapped Jack's shoulder. "Why, by all the powers, lad, how did 'ee ever think as I was going to let that lump of a young pig-driver have the *Pride of Severn*? I let 'un talk and talk about it just because it did always make me laugh to hear a fool, and that fool be worth ten of the usual. No, lad, the *Pride of Severn* be yours, and you be the lad for her. You've saved her when that young gaol-bird of mine didn't know enough to look out for high *Severn*, and I'll let thee have her for good whenever 'ee do like to take her. And, see here, Jack, is it likely to be *Pride of Susan*? Aye, that's right. And I wouldn't wonder then if I found a bit of something just to give at the rechristenin' of her, like. But as for them young pig-drivers, I never could rightly abide 'em."

ANTHONY COLLETT.



THE POISON IVY—RHUS TOXICODENDRON.

THIS species of *Rhus* is familiar to those with a knowledge of trees and shrubs. It is praised for the beautiful colouring of the leaves in autumn, but rarely in catalogues is allusion made to its decidedly poisonous qualities. We have lately noticed this *Rhus* mentioned as a desirable autumn climber for the sake of its brilliant leaf colouring at that season, but not a word as to the danger of its indiscriminate use. In a paper contributed to a recent number of the *Journal of the Royal Horticultural Society*, Lord Annesley draws direct attention to it, and his experience is very interesting. We give it in his own words: "A very beautiful climbing plant, resembling *Ampelopsis Veitchii*, but smaller and more delicate in the foliage, which turns a reddish yellow in the autumn. . . . It is so exceedingly dangerous and poisonous that I doubt whether it ought to be allowed in any garden, at least where ladies can have access to it. After touching the leaves, in a short time the victim becomes aware of irritation in the eyelids, which rapidly increases till it is almost intolerable. They become so swollen that they are almost closed. The rest of the face becomes gradually involved, the eruption and swelling always moving from the forehead downwards. Blisters form upon the surface and weep copiously like those of eczema, the glands of the neck become enlarged, and there is much difficulty in eating or even speaking. Last autumn we had the usual harvest service in the church, and the ladies and children helped to decorate it. Unfortunately, they chose the Poison Ivy to adorn the pulpit, from the beauty of its colouring; one after another they all became ill, some more and some less. The German governess was confined to her bed for more than a week and suffered terribly. One lady consulted a specialist for skin disease, and she was told she had blood poisoning, and went to Harrogate for three weeks. The specialist wrote to me to say that blood poisoning often was caused by bad drains, and strongly advised that they should be tested. I did not quite know what to think about it, when one day three under-gardeners were laid up with it, though very slightly. That settled the matter; it was *Rhus Toxicodendron*, and not blood poisoning at all! I heard a story of a lady living in the country who suffered from eczema and blood poisoning every autumn; so bad was it that her husband thought the house unhealthy and decided to leave it and take another, which he did. However, his wife was so fond of a fine plant of *Rhus Toxicodendron* which they had in the garden that she moved it to the new house, and it was not till some time after that she discovered that it was the cause of her illness. It is well to note that this *Rhus* has been sent out by some nurserymen as a variety of *Ampelopsis japonica* under the name of *A. Hoggi*; therefore

anyone having a plant under that name should be very careful not to touch it. It is curious that some people are not affected by it, but it is so terribly painful that I do not advise anyone to experiment much with it. I have had the only plant that people could easily get access to in my garden burnt." Mrs. Tweedie, in her travels in Mexico, mentions that she was confined to her bed for fifteen days from Poison Ivy. She says: "The parasite in hot climates grows rank, generally in damp shady barrancas, where it spreads prolifically. It is most poisonous when in bloom. Then the pollen flies, and you may be poisoned without touching the plant. The Indians live in constant dread of approaching the creeper. The poison raises large lumps, red and swollen like bites, pus forms, and a kind of blood poisoning, attended by pain and danger, sets in."

PENTSTEMONS.

Last year the graceful, free-blooming Pentstemons were the glory of the garden in autumn. They were undisturbed by heavy rains and rough winds, and carried flowers into October, when the outdoor Chrysanthemums made groups of bronze and crimson in bed and border. These plants were seedlings, and as it is late now for raising seed to give flowering plants this year, we advise purchasing of seedlings raised from the best strains, and transferring them to the garden about the middle of next month. The Pentstemon must not be regarded as tender, as upon light soils in particular it is quite hardy, especially when it receives shelter from the garden wall. Always make a practice, therefore, of gradually hardening off the seedlings as soon as they are of sufficient size to be removed from the seed-pans, and prick them off into boxes of rich nourishing soil. Then, when they have begun to grow again, move them into a sunny frame, where they must remain until planted out. In this way good stocky plants are produced, so that when flowering begins they are sufficiently strong to carry the heavy burden of blossom without support. An excellent plan to secure the finest varieties is to mark the best seedlings and propagate them by cuttings, rejecting all purples and dingy magenta shades. At least, this is the practice of the writer, who rejoices in a set of flowers of pure colouring—crimson, clear white, rose, pink, and shades of the same; and with regard to size, those that approach that of a Gloxinia in dimensions are the most satisfactory. A small Pentstemon flower cannot compare with one that has a wide open mouth, so to say, and looks one almost straight in the face.

NAMED VARIETIES OF PENTSTEMONS

Many beautiful named Pentstemons are in gardens, but these must be purchased as plants and put out in April or May. Cuttings may be taken from these named varieties in autumn, some time in September or early October, and made from the short and sturdy side shoots. Dibble them into pots, using a fairly light compost of equal parts finely-rotted leaf-mould and light loam, with silver sand in fair proportion. Drain the pots well, and transfer them to a shady cold frame. When the weather is hot, sprinkle the cuttings with water daily, a much better plan than soaking them with water once or twice a week. With careful watering, almost every cutting will strike; and as long as severe frost is excluded, they are best kept in the frame until they show signs of needing more room, when they must be shifted into small boxes or pots of rich soil. A little heat should be given to encourage fresh growth. February is a good month to shift the plants, and afterwards harden them off in March. There is nothing like early planting, so that, provided the ground is ready and the plants thoroughly hardened off, they should go out late in April or early May.

There are numberless varieties, and an enthusiastic amateur gardener writes: "My real enthusiasm for Pentstemons dates from the time when I first saw that majestic and beautiful variety, Ninon de Leuclos. A finer garden plant could hardly be imagined, with its immense spikes of large white flowers touched with palest rose. Then it has a perfect habit, and holds itself up on stout stalks. A few varieties of conspicuous merit are the following: Captain Marchand, scarlet with white throat; Chinoiserie, rose-pink and white; Commandant Lamy, scarlet, a very large flower; Domino, bright scarlet blotched with maroon; Fernand Foureau, very large rose-pink

flower; Gabriel Tarle, intense scarlet, one of the best of its colour; Georges Bizet, a massive spike, colour rosy purple, with white throat and deep purple margin; Henri de Lacaze-Duthiers, bright red, white throat; Jean Mace, very bright scarlet, white throat with crimson edge to the florets; John Forbes, a fine spike, the individual flower violet-purple with chocolate margin; Jules Barbier, huge flower of beautiful shape and rosy salmon and white colouring; Le Prophète, carmine with a white throat; Nègresse, magenta-crimson, a very dark and distinct flower; Ninon de Leuclos, a beautiful white; Peter Readman, huge spikes of pale rose flowers with rose and scarlet eye; Phryne, brilliant scarlet with white throat; President Carnot, enormous claret-red flowers and white throat; Paul Vervaine, a pretty shade of rose with white throat, lined and bordered with chestnut crimson; and Thomas Shaw, scarlet, white throat.

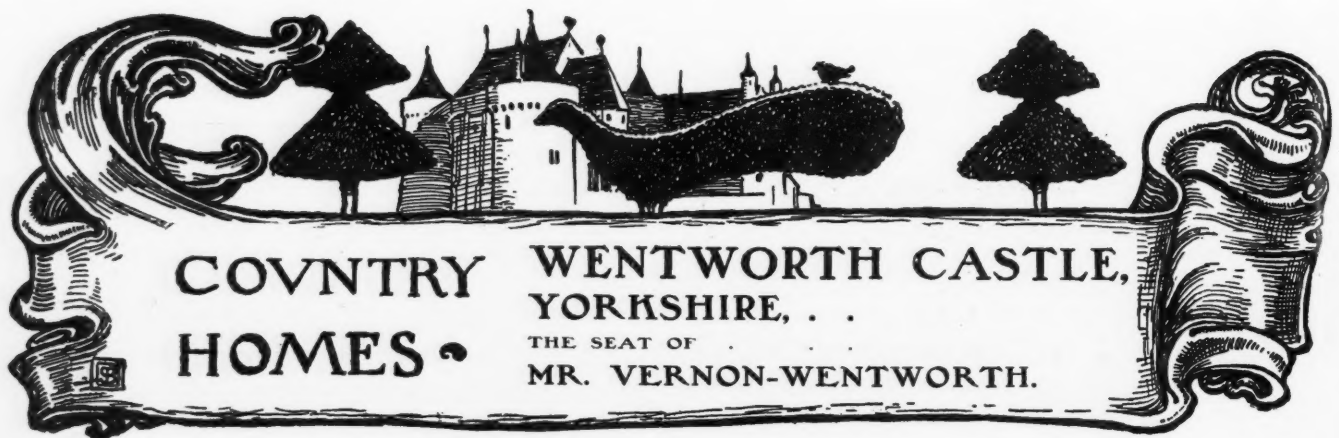
A BEAUTIFUL ALPINE PRIMULA.

A well-known hardy plant-grower writes: "Very few of the early-



R. N. Speaight, ELNITH, DAUGHTER OF THE HON. MRS. WATSON. 175, Regent St.

flowering alpine Primula: are prettier than *P. marginata* when well grown. An excellent specimen of it is now flowering in the alpine plant house at Kew. It is in one of the usual pans in which the majority of plants are grown at Kew, and this receptacle is quite hidden from view by the wealth of leafage and flowers, which are soft bluish mauve in colour and closely arranged in clustered heads on short stems. Both are covered with a somewhat thick, mealy substance. Each flower is about three-quarters of an inch wide, and in the aggregate they make a beautiful display. This Primula prefers a loamy soil in which there is plenty of grit, or even charcoal or finely-sifted, well-burnt clay. This, with good drainage and an occasional low repotting, may be said to constitute the chief cultural items. One or two varieties differ slightly in size and flower colouring, but all are beautiful. *P. marginata* is a native of the Alps of Dauphiny and Piedmont, and has long been known to growers of good alpine or hardy plants."



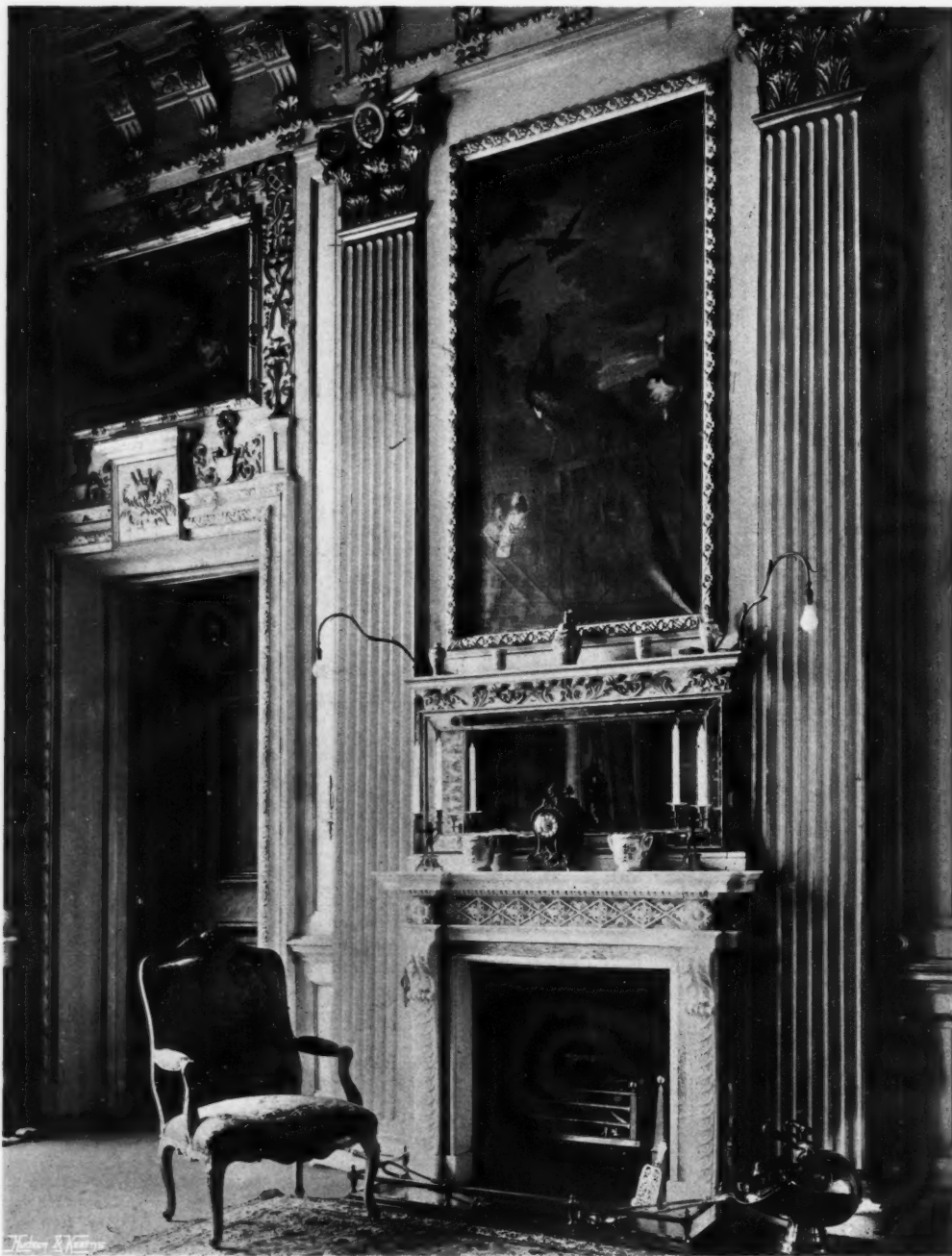
THE stately classic house which Mr. Vernon-Wentworth recently inherited from his father stands some three miles south of Barnsley, in the Yorkshire parish of Silkstone, upon high land between two streams of the Dove, commanding a magnificent prospect, especially towards the east. It is within the township of Stainborough, but the name of that ancient place has almost been lost in that of the Castle itself. In early times this locality belonged to a

family which appears never to have had a surname until, in the time of Henry III., Isabel, an heiress, the daughter of Thomas, son of John, carried it on her marriage with Sir Robert Everingham into a family which held it for some centuries. They were turbulent people at times, and one, Sir Adam de Everingham, who died at a great age in 1380, had incurred the greater excommunication for laying violent hands on a priest in the church of Darfield. Johns and Thomases succeeded one another,

and then came certain Henries. But they gradually sank, and in its fallen fortunes, in 1596, alienated some part of the estate to Thomas Cutler, who belonged to one of those families of lesser degree which struggled to the front in Tudor times, and who afterwards secured the whole estate, so that the Everinghams were known there no more.

The Cutlers, however, became men of greater note, and Sir Gervase, who was knighted by James I., married, as his second wife, the daughter of John, Earl of Bridgewater. He was a stout Royalist in the Civil Wars, raised a large body of men at his own charge, and carrying the family plate, to the value of £1,000, to Pontefract to be coined into money for the King, died at the Castle there. The son of the Cavalier, another Sir Gervase, was both extravagant and dissolute, and was not the man to repair fortunes wasted in the evil days of war. Shortly before he died, or at about the time of his death, his estates at Stainborough passed by sale to Thomas Wentworth, Lord Raby, who was descended from a family settled at Wentworth, near Rotherham, from very early times, which had given birth to the great Earl of Strafford. After the Earl's execution, the estates and honours of Wentworth Woodhouse were restored to his son, but, when this second Earl died, in 1695, his title of Baron Raby came to his cousin Thomas Wentworth, the builder of Wentworth Castle.

Wentworth was a remarkable man in his time, ever a soldier first, coming of an old fighting stock, for his grandfather had been slain for the King at Marston Moor. More of a soldier was Wentworth than a diplomatist, though diplomacy was forced upon him. After the Revolution he became a cornet in Lord Colchester's regiment of horse, and went to Scotland in the



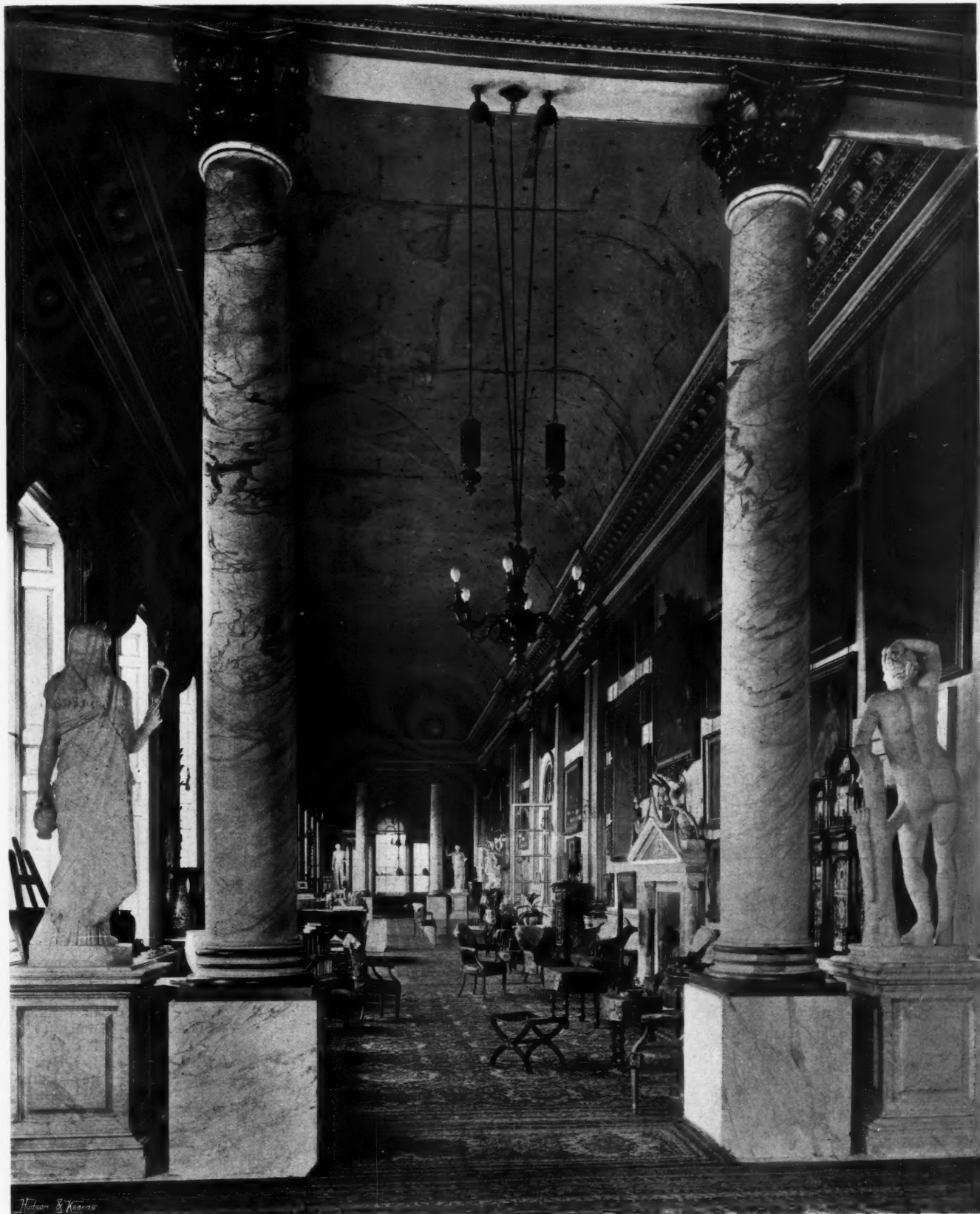
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THE EAST TAPESTRY ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

expedition against Dundee, after which he was fighting in Flanders until the Peace of Ryswick. He was in the vanguard at Steinkirk, 1692, where his squadron was cut to pieces and himself wounded, and as a reward for his valour William III. promised him early promotion. In the next year he became

ham. Raby was given command of the Royal Regiment of Dragoons in 1697, and advanced rapidly until he became a lieutenant-general ten years later. Long before this he had been drawn into the diplomatic circle. He was despatched in 1701 as envoy at the coronation of Frederick, Elector of Branden-



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THE LONG GALLERY.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

aide-de-camp to the King and major of the first troop of Guards. In 1695 he was with William at the siege of Namur, where one of his brothers was killed, and it was shortly afterwards that he inherited the title of Raby, when his cousin, the second Earl of Strafford, died. It was a somewhat barren inheritance, for the Earl left his estate to Thomas Watson, son of Lord Rocking-

burg, as King of Prussia. In the next year he had his horse shot under him at Helchtren, and lost another brother. He was reluctant to relinquish military service, but, being a great favourite with Frederick, he was sent to Berlin as envoy in 1703, and became Ambassador Extraordinary three years later. All along he was in close relations with Marlborough, and, though a



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THE GREAT HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

diplomatic Minister, took some part in the military operations as a volunteer.

He was in England from May to September, 1708, and it was at this date that he bought the estate of the Cutlers at Stainborough. Apparently a substantial mansion of the Stuart character stood there, some parts of which still exist. Probably the soldier-diplomatist did not greatly alter it at this period. He

was, however, weary of his post abroad, and represented to Marlborough his desire to be relieved of it, to be made a Privy Councillor, and to have his cousin's peerage of Earl of Strafford called out in his own person. Although Swift said that he was wholly illiterate, and could not spell, he was a man of taste and art judgment, and in the autumn of 1708 he spent two months in Italy, where he bought many pictures, and suffered severely from

fever at Rome. Before leaving Berlin, Frederick had presented him with a magnificent sword, set in diamonds and worth £15,000. In 1711 he was Ambassador at The Hague, and in that year his wishes were gratified, for he was made a member of the Privy Council and created Viscount Wentworth and Earl of Strafford, with special remainder to his brother Peter. He was one of the plenipotentiaries at The Hague, to negotiate the terms of the Peace subsequently confirmed at Utrecht, and was made a Knight of the Garter. Swift says that Prior was to have been one of his colleagues, but the soldier-diplomatist would have none of him, and Swift wrote, "Lord Strafford is as proud as hell." As is well known, the Treaty did not give universal satisfaction, and so much were the Commons incensed against Strafford, that it was resolved to impeach him for high crimes and misdemeanour. His defence was delivered in the House of Lords, and no further action



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TAPESTRY—"A FARMYARD."

"COUNTRY LIFE."

appears to have been taken. From that time onwards up to his death he lived mostly on his Yorkshire estates, where he greatly improved the old house of the Cutlers, created about it extensive ornamental grounds, and introduced many paintings and other works of art which he had purchased abroad. He corresponded with Pope, and often spoke in the House of Lords. Lord Hervey, one of his enemies, said that he was "a loquacious, rich, illiterate, cold, tedious, constant haranguer, who spoke neither sense nor English," but who always, characteristically as an old soldier, gave an anniversary declaration on the subject of the Army. He died at Wentworth Castle in 1739.

William Wentworth, second Earl of Strafford of the new creation, who lived until 1791, was also a builder. He refronted his father's house after a design of his own, and did a great deal to beautify and enrich it with works of art. The grounds were much improved in his time. Horace Walpole was his intimate friend, and Wentworth Castle and its noble owner are constantly mentioned in the famous "Correspondence" as well as in the "Essay on Landscape Gardening." Walpole was constantly looking forward to visiting the Castle, and when he went there he wrote: "This place is one of the very few that I really like. The situation, woods, views, are perfect in their



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TAPESTRY—"THE HARVEST HOME."

"COUNTRY LIFE."

kinds." "Gramercy for your intention of seeing Wentworth Castle," he wrote to the Miss Berrys in 1789; "it is my favourite of all great seats. Such a variety of ground, of wood and water, and almost all executed and disposed with so much taste by the present Earl. Mr. Gilpin sillily could see nothing but faults there. The new front, in my opinion, is one of the lightest and most beautiful buildings on earth; and, pray, like the little Gothic edifice, and its position in the menagerie. I recommended it



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THE OLD HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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QUEEN ANNE'S SITTING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

and had it drawn by Mr. Bentley from Chichester Cross." When the men were digging for foundations for the enlarged structure in 1762 or 1763, they came upon a walled grave, with a man in armour, and Walpole immediately pronounced it to be Norman, though apparently without much warrant. The Earl, like his father, was a collector, and spent much time abroad. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu met him in Rome in 1741, when he was a young man, and says "he behaved himself really very modestly and genteely, and had lost the pertness he had acquired in his mother's assemblies." In the quadrangle of the house is a statue of this Earl by Rysbrack. He died childless, and the title and estate went by the special remainder to Frederick Thomas, third Earl of Strafford, his cousin, who also died childless in 1799, when the estate passed to Mrs. Hatfield-Kaye, his sister.

The present owner is descended from Harriet, sister of the second Earl, who married Mr. Henry Vernon of Hilton. When the estate passed to these descendants in the female line, by the will of Mrs. Hatfield-Kaye, Mr. Frederick Thomas William Vernon added the name of Wentworth.

Wentworth Castle, made what it is by these interesting men, is a great and stately erection, uniting some things that are old, like the quaint room we depict, with the dignified aspect of great classic forms. There is a magnificent hall, its panelled ceiling adorned with allegories in the manner of Verrio, supported by fluted Ionic columns, while the pavement is in black and white marble. The hand of Grinling Gibbons is traced in much of the fine wood carving, in panels and friezes, and there are characteristic mantels supported by figures. The East Tapestry Room has rich fluted Corinthian pilasters and a boldly modelled

ceiling; and Queen Anne's Sitting-room is in the same style. According to the manner of the time the apartments communicate with one another. The Great Stairway has a magnificent carved balustrade, admirable in its style and kind. Everywhere the panelling and decorative work is extremely good. The gem of the house is the Long Gallery, with its marble Corinthian columns and pilasters. This great and noble chamber has fine enriched tablatures and mouldings, and a coved ceiling.

Here are many gems of the famous art collection, but the whole house is filled with interesting pictures. Some few are copies of great masters, and the authorship of some others may be disputed, but there is no gainsaying that the collection is one of the richest in the North of England. Among the

portraits are those of Thomas, first Lord Wentworth of Nettlestead, Lord Chamberlain and Privy Councillor to Edward VI.; of the second Wentworth, his son, who was Governor of Calais, and surrendered the place to the Duke of Guise; of Henry Danvers, Earl of Danby; of the Earl of Strafford, a fine portrait in armour; of the Earl of Essex, by Zuccherò, and of many others, including copies of great pictures of the Royal house of Stuart. One notable picture is a portrait of a monk, sometimes said to be by Holbein, but ascribed by Waghen to Tintoretto. An excellent picture by Lorenzo Lotto attracts attention. There are also many works by Vandyck and other painters of the Northern Schools. Much excellent sculpture is also in the house, and the tapestries are very remarkable. Two pieces, quite characteristic, are illustrated.





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THE SMOKING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

It will be seen that Wentworth Castle deserves to rank high among the stately places of the country on account of its great personal interests and associations with prominent men, its architectural merits, and the richness of its extensive collections.

THE KINGFISHERS' HIGHWAY.

THROUGH the copse that meets the river at right angles winds the stream which is the Kingfishers' Highway, for those brilliant sprites are ever speeding up and down it with their piercing, elfish cry. A few small fish live in it, and the wildfowl occasionally resort to it in spring as a quiet lane where they may carry on their courtships unobserved. The water-vole is one of its regular frequenters, and is never tired of making new tunnels in its damp banks. It is he who causes the reflections in it to tremble as he glides towards one of these. At the threshold he will pause, and, if the watcher keeps absolutely still to look at him, he returns the compliment, drawing his own conclusions with the utmost calm, under the idea that the exact match in colour between his fur and the mould render him invisible. With beads of water in his woolly coat, his small feet in the stream, and his round head drawn up, this little wild being sits motionless, thinking his own thoughts of the intruder. He abruptly vanishes when he has had enough of the unwonted spectacle. The ponds fed by the stream are frozen, the sky is grey, the monotony of the great cloud sheet only being relieved here and there by the deep creases and soft curves which the

winds make in it as they do in an expanse of water; the trees stand dark and dejected, no gleam of sunshine bringing to light the elms' lichen or brightening the orange tips of the willows. All things look wintry, but the birds are talking of spring. A skylark fluttering through the air trills a low, sweet song, his small head tilted back, the better to watch the companion hovering over him. She leads him this way and that, and he follows all her movements, flying just below her and singing on, with now and then a breathless pause—singing, not the song that every bright day draws from him, not the song that comes down to us from the clouds, but a new song made up of many secrets, a hymn of love, in fact. The air rings with bird melody, the titmice introducing unfamiliar variations into their winter ditties, the thrush and blackbird piping as though a summer sun were setting, the chaffinch eagerly inciting his neighbours to rivalry; the robin, so tiny in his mighty tree, the wren hidden in depth of tangle—all are singing, all are glad.

The first pond the Kingfishers' Highway turns into, after creeping under one of its little mossy bridges, is named after the chaffinches, whose voices are ever to be heard about its shores. One of these, carolling on a naked branch, draws in his feathers timidly at the sound of a human tread. He must be allowed to finish his verse before being further alarmed, for what could more intensely aggravate a chaffinch, engaged in warbling forth his blithe little spirit, than to have his ideas rudely jostled and be compelled to allow his rival the last note? A bird singing—really singing, not only holding a soliloquy or talking to his friends—deserves respect as an artist obeying the inspiration within him.

The Chaffinches' Pond lies half in a meadow and half in the copse. It is covered with a strong sheet of ice, beneath which minute silver globes are clustered; nothing moves in it except now and then one of these bubbles. And yet who could tell the numbers of living things it contains: of frogs, toads, newts, and fishes, their masses of eggs all containing germs of life; the pupæ and larvæ of all the winged things that throng over it in summer? There is little sign of them now, but they are there, buried in the mud, waiting for spring. A kingfisher dashes down the highway and out into the open, making for an overhanging willow, but the terrifying human apparition that greets him throws him into confusion, and, not knowing which direction to take, he whirls round the pond, his sapphire phantom self flickering through the ice, and following beneath him when he finally retreats by the way he came.

The grey Wagtail's Creek lies off the right bank of the stream; the hazels standing in it, break, with loud rending and cracking, the ice built up about them, as they rock in the wind. But at the edge the surface, unaffected by the shaking of the trees, offers a smooth blue mirror to the grey wagtail, and here she finds it gratifying to study her reflection. She walks to and fro, her long tail oscillating gaily up and down, her black eyes, marking, apparently, the delicate hues of her winter dress—primrose and lavender, set off by a bright gold collar. Perhaps she is aware, too, of the grace that is in every line of her tiny person, in the narrow folded wing, in the prettily poised head, in the whole fairy frame balanced on the minute pattering feet. She will not tolerate the open admiration of a stranger, however, and hastens to betake herself, with her long tail and all her finery, out of sight. The thread of water that feeds this pool from the main stream gropes its way on through the underwood to the Ox-eyes' Pond, its course at present marked by a narrow fragile chain of ice.

The pair of great tits, who first demanded that the place be called after them, cry out warningly, and some wood-pigeons toss themselves skywards, clapping their wings noisily. It is unnecessary to refrain from frightening these; they enjoy taking sudden flight into the keen air no matter whither, not having nests as yet to hold them captives to anxiety.

A stoat makes his appearance—suddenly, after the manner of woodland folk. Quietly bent upon his hunting, he bounds lightly to the foot of an ivy-grown tree, makes ready to spring, then turns his head to look deliberately at the unwelcome intruder. Let him not discover the quiver of a muscle or an eyelid in the hated form, and he will carelessly revert his gaze to select at a glance a spot bare of leaves halfway up the tree trunk, and gain it in a leap. He might have chosen his very foothold beforehand, so noiselessly does he alight; the only sound to be detected as he clenches the ivy fibres being the sharp simultaneous scratch of

his gripping claws. One moment he is clinging to the brown naked entanglement of stems and the next he has effaced himself so completely that it is almost impossible to believe that he is there. He has elongated himself to press his head under a scanty tuft of leaves that had appeared out of his reach, he has flattened himself until not a hair of his white under-parts remains in view, his bushy tail has somehow become the same colour, and less hairy, than the ivy's brawny scions. He manages his breathing imperceptibly, retains his position unflinchingly, even while a human monster steps close beneath him. Oh! little birds, how terrible a foe is this!

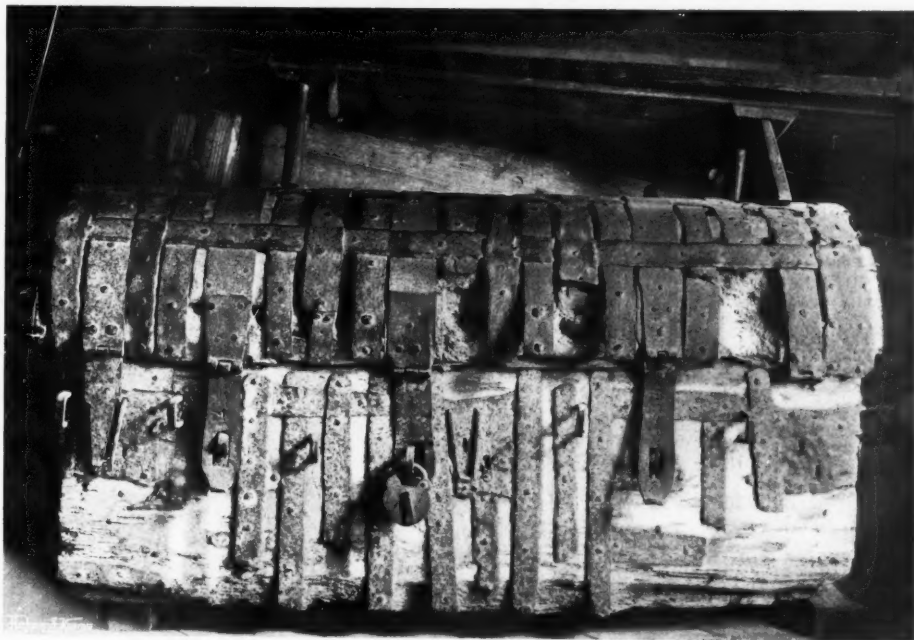
Where the copse touches the river the Kingfishers' Highway lies a meadow's breadth away, for, emerging from the Chaffinches' Pond, it winds on through the fields, feeding the Tom Tits' and

Greenfinches' Ponds, and probably others, before joining the more important stream itself. At the advent of a giant without a gun, the birds do not trouble to withdraw farther than the opposite shore of the river, knowing the deep grey current to be an impassable barrier to large creatures without wings. And so, at the distance merely of a stone's throw, a wagtail, brave in gold, paddles, keeping carefully within his depth, and a pair of nuthatches continue their difference of opinion in an elm, and a party of siskins their squabbling with the ever-quarrelsome titmice. Three gulls fly overhead, laughing loudly as they think of spring, a moorhen gets up from the sedges and flies low over the surface of the water, her head drooping between her beating wings—she is looking at her reflection in expectancy of spring.

MADGE BLUNDELL.

SOME CHURCH CHESTS.

THERE are countless proofs, not merely *a priori* proofs either, that the chest was one of the first inventions of man for his own comfort. Neolithic man doubtless hid his treasures, such as they were, in a hole in the ground or in the rock. Such, at any rate, was the fashion, as we see in the British Museum, in which he kept the dead bodies of his friends after treating them ingeniously with bitumen. The neolithic dog, if there was one, unquestionably buried his bones, as the twentieth century dog buries his; but the difference between the neolithic dog and the contemporary man was that the man remembered where the hole and the treasures were, and the dog forgot, as he still forgets. Then neolithic man put a slab of stone, wood, or slate over the mouth of his hole, and covered it cunningly with sods or leaves. In fact, he made what the Welsh boy to this day calls a *kithfan*, a hiding-place. (I believe I could find one now under an apple tree in Carnarvonshire in which sundry birds' eggs, marbles, and miscellaneous treasures were deposited at least thirty years ago, and I have no doubt that the traditional method of constructing a *kithfan* had descended by word of mouth from the days of neolithic man himself.) Having done thus much, man had evolved half the idea of a chest, that is to say, the inside half of it, and it remained for him to evolve the outside half of it, so that he might have



Mrs. Deves Broughton.

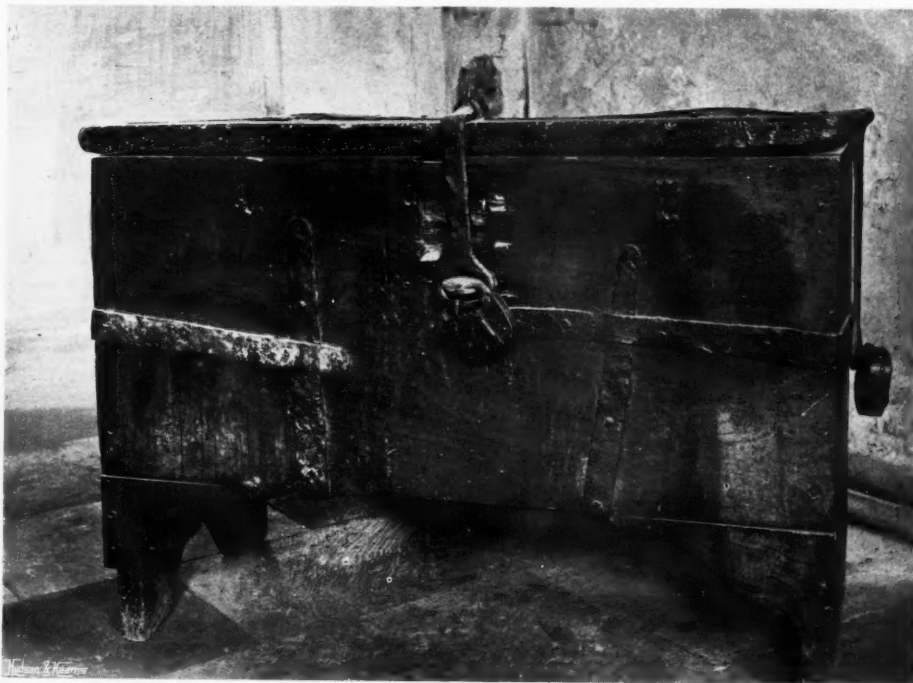
THE HUSBORNE CRAWLEY CHEST.

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something strong and more or less portable in which to conserve his property. Perhaps a hollow tree trunk was the first suggestion of a chest which Nature made to him. So much for induction; but philology enables us to apply the more convincing method of deduction. The word chest,

spelled, of course, in many ways, is of immemorial antiquity. It is found in Greek as *kiste*, in Latin as *cista*, in old Friesic and Danish as *kiste*, in Icelandic as *kista*, in Welsh as *cist*, and in Northern English as *kist*. In fact, it is so universal that one hesitates to say that it is derived either from Latin or from Greek, since the probabilities are vastly in favour of a common origin for all the words. It might indeed almost be said that there were always chests, even long before the days when Ezekiel wrote of Tyrus: "These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise."

Into English life chests have entered largely. They have been defined as "boxes, properly of considerable size, made of wood, iron, or other material, with a hinged lid, used as a depository for treasure, papers of record, clothing or other articles." Welsh brides (and for that matter English brides also) always had their chests of linen, gentlemen had their chests of plate, and, above all, every parish church had its chest for the preservation of papers of record, and of the sacred vessels. Of these some very fine



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STOKE ALBANY—SOLID AND SECURE.

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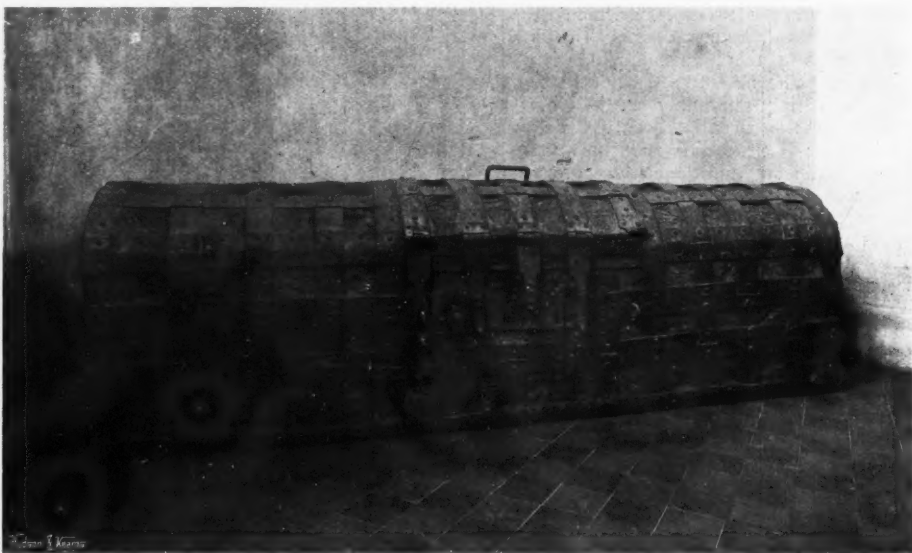
STEVINGTON'S MASSIVE CHEST.

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examples are given, and all of them are illustrative of a precautionary method, used by our ancestors, which is still observed occasionally in modern times. In a book on ancient English Gilds it is written: "Ye sd chest to be locked with three seuerall lockes at ye least wch shall be kept by three of ye sd ffeoffees." Our ancestors would not trust any single person with unrestricted access to treasure or records. Thus, the old church chest at Stoke Albany has two separate keyholes as well as two padlocks, and it seems once to have had another lock, which has been cut out; that of Tempsford was constructed for three locks and two padlocks; that of Stevington for three or four locks and one padlock; while the splendid old chest of Husborne Crawley has three padlocks and a whole army of inside locks. Very often the inside locks were so arranged that they would only allow themselves to be unlocked simultaneously, and it is pleasant to think of the custodians standing side by side, each straining at his own key in unison until at last the bolts moved. Then sometimes the lid would rise with a spring, and inside the lids of many parish chests is a truly wondrous concatenation of bolts, springs, and cogs. Beautiful, as a rule, the chests were

not. They were mere boxes of substantial oak, bound round and about with massive bands of iron; but, as we see them now, they present a certain impressiveness, because of their rude strength, and they are essentially quaint and interesting. Of their antiquity, in the absence of local record or of some inscription, only a rash and unscrupulous man would attempt a conjecture. They are very old, almost as old as the word chest itself, and that suffices.

The days of practical use are now long past. A burglar would laugh at them, much as in old times the highwayman was reputed to say, "a lock upon leather, my knife laughs at it." A fireproof safe is worth, for practical purposes, all the church chests in England or Scotland as a receptacle for preserving documents which are likely to be necessary for purposes of rapid reference; and, for the safety of documents and records of historical interest, new and very necessary safeguards have been provided. Sooth to say it was not merely because the chests of old time were rude, hardly damp-proof, and by no means fireproof, that new safeguards were called for, but

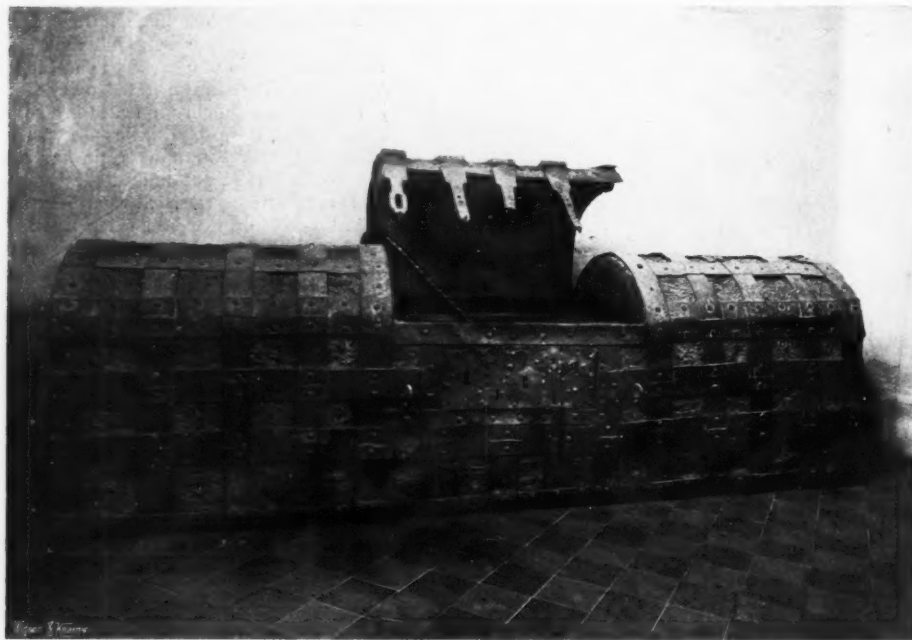


Mrs. Delves Broughton.

TEMPSFORD CHEST CLOSED.

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because, in days past, a most shocking carelessness had been shown by those who had the custody of the records supposed to be preserved in them. Musty old papers have always been valuable, but their value has only recently been realised to the full. Not many years have passed since, at a town within a hundred miles of Oxford, a town more than commonly rich in historical memories, a large collection of old documents was burned, not merely by accident, but deliberately and in order to economise room. If such an outrage could be perpetrated by the authorities of a considerable community at the latter end of the nineteenth century, can it be matter for surprise that incumbents of parishes in days gone by have shown in many cases absolute carelessness concerning the fate of the parish records? Old parchment deeds have been made into fly-books by parsons who were disciples of Izaak Walton, or have served the parson's wife as covers for her jam pots. Priceless documents have been disfigured and destroyed by damp; church mice have found their way into the chests and have reared their young there. So the chests have had their day, although, to judge by the proportions and the strength of them, their makers deemed that they were

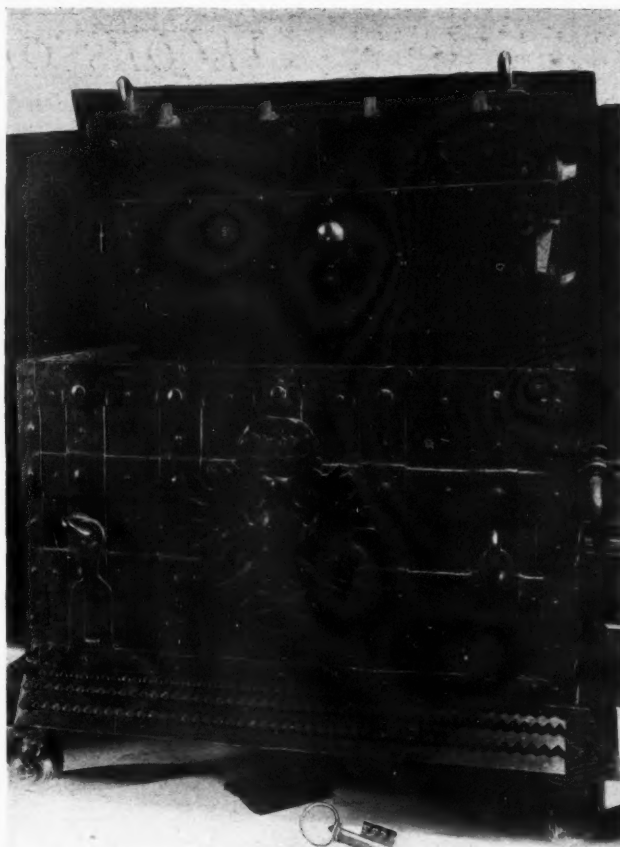


Mrs. Delves Broughton.

THE LOCKS OF THE TEMPSFORD CHEST.

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building for all time. They are curios, grand and imposing curios, and nothing more. The examples given are very fine, that of the chest at Tempsford Church (Tempsford is in Bedfordshire) being perhaps the best. Noteworthy are the symmetry and completeness of the criss-cross bands of armour, the domed top, and the metal lining, designed, no doubt, as a protection against fire. The chest at Husborne Crawley is ruder in form, probably older—for the wood is more decayed with age—and the iron bands are put on more roughly. But it is not right to judge entirely by the signs of decay, since the conditions in which the chests have been kept may not have been identical. For sheer massiveness of construction the Stoke Albany chest would be hard to match, but it is clear that a mouse could easily creep in under the lid in several places, and, in spite of an assertion to the contrary in a recent novel, the church mouse does exist. A very fine chest, too, is that from Stevington, of which a picture has been secured. In their places these chests have been for ages and ages, and they have fulfilled their functions as well as the carelessness of men permitted. In their places some of them may have been when Norman William won the battle of Hastings. In their places they will very likely remain, interesting memorials of days entirely passed away, long after the third millenary has begun, long after he who writes and those who read have had their names entered for the last time in the books of the parish. Others as fine could no doubt be discovered. The writer knows of a few such; but he will warrant that there are none better to be found in the length and breadth of England.



Mrs. D. Broughton. "TRY ME, I DEFY YOU."

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When all that goes before had been written, there came under notice a chest, the property of a lady in the Midlands, which transcends in interest any that the writer, who thinks that he knows not a little of chests, has met, so to speak, in private life. It is remarkably like to one exhibited in the Tudor Exhibition, and there styled an Armada chest. But, it will be observed, the arms surrounding the somewhat ostentatious keyhole in the centre of the front panel are distinctly Austrian. Can it then be a Spanish chest? Did not Charles I. of Spain, from 1516 to 1556, reign in Austria also, and was he not the son of Philip of Austria and the Infanta Joanna? So this chest, with its Austrian Royal Arms, may well be of exceptional if not unique interest, and the tradition that it was brought from Spain after the Peninsular War has every probability to recommend it. Its structure is remarkable—3ft. 3in. high, 1ft. 9in. wide and deep; fast bound in massive iron, it is of extraordinary strength. Moreover, the most expert locksmith in Europe might be allowed to tamper with the apparent lock with impunity. For that keyhole, which seems to say, "Try me, I defy you," is a delusion and a snare. Not through it shall you move the six strong bolts which show so plainly in the picture. To find the real keyhole you must first press the right projection on the outside of the lid, and then a shutter will glide away, disclosing a keyhole, through which the key to work all the bolts simultaneously must be inserted. Truly, on seeing such a chest as this, one is disposed to say that not love alone laughs at locksmiths. The key, which is shown at the bottom of the picture, is itself a work of art, and would be greatly prized by collectors of such objects. CYGNUS.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

A COMPARISON WITH LAST YEAR.

WITH the beginning of April we always feel that we have passed through the first crisis of the year; and it is interesting to compare the position of Nature with that which she occupied at the same time last year. The characteristic of March this year has been wind; not, however, the nipping east winds traditionally associated with the rude month, but persistent breezes and gales from the warm south-west. That even these have retarded vegetation is shown by the fact that, while low-growing plants in sheltered places have profited by the milder air to come into flower and leaf earlier than last year, many trees in exposed places have fallen behind last year's dates. Thus larch trees, which the sparrows were mischievously stripping of their pretty pink flowers on March 26th last year, showed no flowers until the 29th this year. Ash trees were seen to be well ahead of the oaks in their annual race of leafage last year at a date when neither were sufficiently advanced this year for decisive comparison. These, however, were all trees in exposed situations.

THE ADVANTAGE OF SHELTER.

In sheltered places a sycamore was almost in full leaf by the date when last year the buds were noticed to be merely swollen and ready to open, and the willows were in full bloom and roaring with bees among the catkins when in 1902 the greenish tinge of the opening buds just became marked. The swallow came into flower a full week earlier, while all spring flowers—primroses, violets, anemones, cuckoo-flower, marsh-marigold, etc.—have been considerably earlier than last year. Of birds, the song-thrush has been peculiarly early in nesting this year, every garden almost having its nests of half-fledged young ones before the end of March, where blackbirds and even missel-thrushes had only new-laid eggs. But to a certain extent, no doubt, the missel-thrush, with that fondness for exposed situations which justifies his title of stormcock, felt the same retarding influence which kept back the trees in breezy places, for by the end of March it was evident that most of our common resident birds which build in cosy nooks—the wrens, hedge-sparrows, yellow-hammers, greenfinches, chaffinches, etc.—had made better progress with their domestic affairs than in the previous year.

A WEEK OF MIGRANTS.

So far as the East Coast is concerned, our summer visitors seem to have felt the retarding influence of the winds; for, with the solitary exception of

the willow-wren—which appeared several weeks before its time—none have, so far as I am aware, been noted in advance of last year's dates. With regard to those birds, however, which partially migrate, sending flocks southwards in autumn and northwards in spring, while some remain to spend the winter with us, their movements have—as with the departure of our winter visitors—almost exactly coincided with last year's records. Thus during the final week of March, 1902, flocks of pipits, pairs of redpoles, flocks of linnets, corn-buntings, small parties of pied wagtails, flocks of peewits, several kestrels, flocks of fieldfares and starlings, and companies of hoodie crows were noticed to have arrived at a certain point on the East Coast; and there, for the same week of 1903, the diary reads: Flocks of pipits, redpoles, flocks of linnets, corn-buntings, kestrels, flocks of starlings, companies of hoodie crows, flocks of fieldfares and peewits, and small parties of pied wagtails. Thus exactly the same birds in almost the same numbers were observed to be passing during the same week of two successive years; and with the end of the week in both cases the movements of these kinds of birds practically ceased. On the same date, too, in both years, namely, March 25th, the last curlew was seen and heard at exactly the same spot; and carrying the enquiry further back to 1901, almost the same movements of migrating birds were recorded during the same week. Thus the sequence of events in Nature may for a series of years so closely follow the calendar as almost to suggest that they are regulated by it.

FIXED TIMES AND SEASONS.

The coincidences between 1901 and 1902 were less remarkable, perhaps, because during the earliest months of both of those years the variations of the weather were curiously similar. In both the middle of January was a period of alternate frost and thaw, and the middle of February brought the severest weather of the year, when redwings, fieldfares, and missel-thrushes were picked up, dead and dying, in the fields. In both years, too, the lambs came bleating into a hard world of blizzards. This year no such set-back occurred, and plants that grow in sheltered places have certainly profited by its absence; yet, taking wild life of plant and animal as a whole, it is astonishing how small a difference the vagaries of the seasons make and how punctually Nature keeps to her accustomed dates at the turning points of spring and autumn. In some respects we know that she is able to effect this by a fixed periodicity in her operations, which is almost entirely independent of the weather. As the farmer knows beforehand the exact date on which,



J. S. Bond.

YOUNG NIGHTJAR.

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barring accidents, his first lambs will be born—indeed, he has arranged the date to suit his own convenience—so, no doubt, there runs through other functions of Nature, such as the migrating and nesting of birds, a periodicity of impulse which depends little on the weather. In chilly weather birds' eggs take a little longer to hatch, and moulting may be postponed for a few days; but as the seasons pass we see more and more clearly that the sequence of Nature's changes is regulated more by inside than outside influences. Wild life has, in fact, adapted itself to the cycle of the year, which is thus marked out into periods proper to each function, with but scant margin for variation on either side.

NATURE'S INEXORABLE RULE.

But for this, all Nature would be thrown into inextricable confusion by a year of anomalous seasons. Thus last year it may have seemed deplorable that we should be picking up starved swallows near the end of May, and one was tempted to wonder why Nature had not given to the swallows an instinct of migration which would save them from the hardships of inclement spring as well as from those of winter. Yet endless confusion and delay of the breeding season would result if swallows took the hint of cold winds in May as in October; and though it often entails terrible sufferings for many individuals, the rule of Nature seems inexorable that birds which have reached their northern limit in spring must stay there no matter what the weather may be, because it is to the advantage of the species that the widest range should be fully occupied and the broods reared as early as possible.

MORE LENIENT IN AUTUMN.

In the autumn migration Nature is much more lenient in her rules, and often you may observe migrating species halting for idle weeks on their journey and drifting backwards and forwards according to wind and weather. The reason of this is that then the interests of the individual and the species are identical. There is no question of occupying a wide range or rearing an early brood. Nature's sole object is the preservation of as many lives as possible. So the birds are allowed to take things easily on their autumn migration, following their own desires to find food and pleasant weather; not as when in spring the periodic impulse commands them to retrace their flight and find again the regions of their homes, at the earliest moment which may be compatible with reasonable chance of breeding in safety. Thus we can see why the sand-martin, which, though the weakest and smallest of the swallow tribes, can hawk for flies in the shelter of the sand-cliffs where it nests, should come so long before the swift, which seeks its food in the bleak, wind-swept stretches of the upper air; why some of the small warblers which hunt the budding hedges for food and nest in the early tangles of vegetation at their base should be able to come so early, while the reed-warbler and sedge-warbler have to wait until the reeds and sedges have grown. There are many unsolved riddles, of course, in bird-migration, but most of these only require careful investigation by shrewd observers to be satisfactorily explained.

THE NIGHTJAR'S DISGUISES.

I referred lately to the exquisite markings on the feathers of the nightjar, which harmonise so perfectly with the mottled hues of the ground that she is practically invisible when she crouches on the nest, though the eggs can be seen with ease when they are left uncovered; and herewith are some pictures which admirably illustrate the equal invisibility of the young, although the bird depicted happens to be a Canadian nightjar. In one the egg is plain enough, but the young nightjar, although it is boldly standing up and showing fight, is not nearly so conspicuous; while in the two others, though the fully-grown bird is making no attempt to hide, you cannot help noticing how marvellously his plumage is adapted for concealment. Incidentally, too, these illustrate excellently another point

which I noticed, namely, the extraordinary gape of the nightjar; for, in his "Hungry" portrait, what you might take to be his chest thrown forward is really his under-jaw, feathered almost to the tip, with a gape which extends, as I said, to beyond the eye.

E. K. R.

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

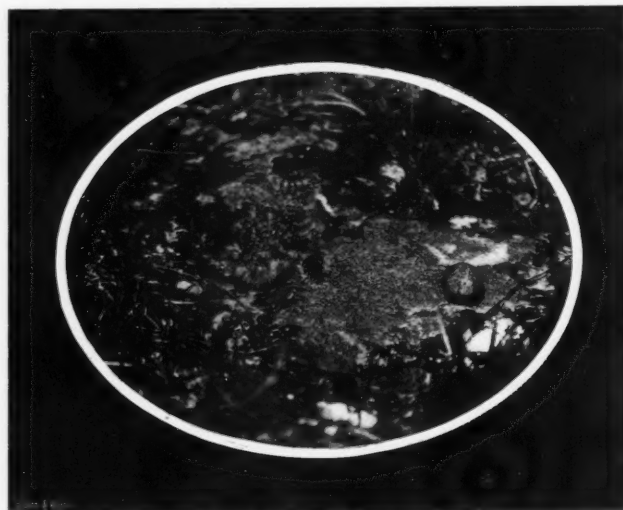
WHEN we say that Mr. Paul Fountain's second book has all the interest of the first we are not belittling the value of time and experience. His "Great Deserts and Forests of North America" was the result of a lifetime spent on the prairie and in the great West. He was one of the old pioneers and traders who began his adventurous life in the days when mules and waggons, nicknamed the "prairie schooners," had not been superseded by trunk railways, and Apache and Comanche Indians scalped and plundered on the skirts of the Santa Fé trail. The second, dealing with the *Great Mountains and Forests of South America* (Longmans, 9s. 6d. net), is the outcome of journeys made solely as explorations and collecting expeditions; but so fresh are the scenes and so well-equipped the mind and temper of the traveller, that his contribution is a delight to read, and a store of fresh facts from some of the least-known portions of the globe. The scenes of his journeys, wherever he went, in South and Central America lay mainly in the great tropical forests. Except when crossing the dizzy heights or profound chasms of the Central Andes, the watershed of the great rivers of the southern forests, he is always in the mysterious land of trees,

the least populous and the least accessible of all habitable portions of the earth's surface.

The literature of travel and natural history in tropical South America is scanty, though it numbers treasures in its list. Azara, the old Spanish naturalist, is a link between the chroniclers of the days of Cortes and Pizarro and the naturalists of to-day—Bates's "Naturalists on the Amazon," Charles Waterton's striking little classic on the Guiana forests and the Wourali poison, the "Naturalist in Nicaragua," and Mr. O. Salvin's ornithological researches, with parts of Humbolt's "Aspects of Nature," and the "Notes on Venezuela," by Schomburgk, whose authority on the boundary question was constantly cited during the dispute between England and the Venezuelan Government. Mr.

Fountain's volume deserves a place of its own in this distinguished list.

Like all Brazilian explorers, he entered the country by river. His equipment was modest. His means, as he frankly says, did not allow more. He purchased a boat able to carry two or three tons of stores, but which drew three feet of water. To reach the banks where the water was shallow he himself built a bark canoe, such as every Canadian Indian can make, but which these southern natives have never thought of. Four large and savage dogs to act as watches and guards, for which they proved most useful, and lastly two sailors, a Brazilian and Venezuelan, who came with atrocious characters, but served him faithfully,



J. S. Bond.

EGG AND FLEDGLING.

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J. S. Bond.

HUNGRY.

Copyright

made up the party, which succeeded in penetrating to some of the most remote parts of the vast Brazilian forest and river region. The men could talk English, and in the evenings their great delight was to have Dickens read to them aloud from some volumes taken in the boat.

Briefly, he penetrated far up the river Trombetas, and accomplished a journey of extraordinary interest up another great tributary of the Amazon, the Purus; spent long months in the central Brazilian forest, visited the little-known Ecuador Andes, the Highlands of New Granada, and the mountains of Chili and Peru, with parts of Bolivia, and the central forests of Guiana, bringing to all those sights and scenes the mingled simplicity of thought and practical resource in solitary travel the narration of which gave such charm to the story of his days in the prairies of the North and West. Though the scene and the means of travel were absolutely different—forests instead of prairies and boats instead of mule waggons—he never seems to have been at a loss nor out of his element. The date at which he made his journey was shortly before Bates's days on the Amazon, but he was a detached man, wandering to please himself, knew nothing of Bates, and, as he says, simply sets down what he saw.

What he did see might, if expanded, fill several volumes. The aspects of Nature alone, in such different surroundings as the Brazilian forest and the Ecuador Andes, might be the text for many chapters of descriptive comment. All we shall attempt to do here is to notice his remarkable contributions, from personal observation, to the natural history of the creatures of the great tropical forest, and his striking discovery with regard to the Wourali poison. Anyone who has tried to discover what is known about such creatures as the peccary, the forest jaguar, the anaconda, the tapir, the ocelot, and the smaller forest mammals of South America, will find that the first-hand accounts are very few and meagre, though those of the birds and insects are more satisfactory. The deadly Wourali poison, used by certain Guiana tribes in their blow-pipes, to discover the secret of which was one of Charles Waterton's main objects in visiting these forests, is supposed to contain as its chief ingredient the juice or decoction of the Wourali vine. Mr. Fountain, whose experiments are fuller and more detailed than Waterton's, made a discovery of what may, after all, be the main ingredient, and in any case was employed by him, we believe, for the first time for such a purpose—viz., snake poison.

He found the poison-making tribes (it is manufactured by the medicine-men, who keep it a trade secret), saw the natives use it, noted, and describes here their methods, and the behaviour of the stricken animals, and then, after seeing various medicine-men, set to work to make it according to their prescription. He produced a stuff exactly like the Wourali in colour, consistence, and smell, but though the fresh ingredients were deadly when eaten, the decoction proved absolutely harmless. He felt certain that though the rest of the prescription was correct the essential ingredient had been withheld from him. About this time a boy was brought to him dying from a bite from the bushmaster snake. The symptoms, including collapse, paralysis, insensibility to pain, and the intermittent beating of the heart, were so exactly like those produced by Wourali poison that Mr. Fountain procured the poison of the bushmaster, the rattlesnake, and others. Into this he caused blow-pipe arrows to be dipped. When the poison was still wet it was in every case fatal. Mixed with the preparation made on the medicine-men's recipe it was at once converted into a substance having all the attributes and effects of the Indian-made article.

The author found jaguars so numerous up the Purus that he feels sure he might have killed a hundred in a short time. He saw their cubs of all sizes, and watched them lie out on boughs and strike fish, always selecting very large ones and never missing when they struck. He was also an eye-witness of a jaguar attacking, and badly mauling, a puma. Apparently the forest jaguars are stronger, and the forest pumas weaker, than those of the plains, where Mr. Hudson found that, though the two species were both common, the puma had the best of such encounters. Jaguars never attacked him, and were unpleasantly tame. "I have seen one sneak by me within 20 yds. like a great dog," he writes. Jaguars will kill full-grown horses, cattle, and tapirs, pumas only immature animals of these species; but they will kill small animals, and are particularly fond of porcupines. He saw one of the smaller felines, the jaguarondi cat, kill a great ant-eater, and shot it after it had done so. His accounts of the peccaries entirely confirm the relations of Schomburk. He found the white-tipped and black species feeding in the same forests, and being partly a cripple and unable to run was always afraid to meddle with them.

"They are so aggressive that it is highly dangerous to go anywhere near them. . . . Both species will attack man readily enough, with or without provocation. When a herd is feeding in the forest they often disperse over a considerable area, but they always assemble when they have done feeding; and their hearing must be very acute, for if one gives the

alarm by a kind of squeal, or by gnashing his tusks, they assemble to his aid with remarkable speed, rushing together angrily with their tusks rattling at a tremendous rate. The hunter can only save his life by climbing a tree, and he will be fortunate if they keep him a prisoner for twenty-four hours only. On the ground he would be cut to ribbons, so sharp are their tusks; while if he commences firing from the tree, the peccaries will take cover, and wait about for him. This is not conjecture on my part. I know the men intimately who have gone through such experiences."

The tapirs give the best "beef" in the forests, and are consequently frequently killed. They are always timid, even in the uninhabited parts, live in pairs, and in Brazil are as aquatic as a hippopotamus. Among other mammals, Mr. Fountain came across a ground-feeding bat, which could crawl quite fast on the level, and fed on insects there as a hedgehog does. His descriptions of the otters sleeping on the Victoria Regia leaves, of the great forest eagles, and other forest and Andean birds, are extremely fresh and interesting, and the description of the various bird-killing spiders is not less so.

C. J. C.

"THE DIARY OF A TURK," by Halil Halid, M.A., M.R.A.S. (Black). Why this book should be called a diary it is difficult to say, for it is an incomplete autobiography, if anything, with a number of remarkably interesting digressions into the constitution of society in Turkey. But this is not to say that the work is not far better worth reading than many a diary that has been published. Indeed it would be a good thing, albeit quite futile, to advise those who prate and rant of the "Unspeakable Turk" without much knowledge to study these pages. But this would not suit their book at all, for they desire nothing better, or nothing worse, than to see one side of the question, and that a side which does not really exist. Halil Halid is a man with a grievance against Abdul Hamid, who has deprived, or has permitted his corrupt officials to despoil, Halil Halid of his hereditary estates. For Abdul Hamid friend Halil has not a good word to say. "The administration in the reign of Abdul Hamid has been the most corrupt that our unfortunate country has ever known." But, being a Turk himself, a Turk of Asia Minor, and proud of it, he has a good deal to say in favour of the Turkish race and the Mahomedan religion, and of the ignorance of the average Englishman concerning both. That which he has to say he expresses simply and forcibly by telling the reader of his own upbringing, of the life of the harem, and at school. Perhaps he need hardly have gone out of his way, as he does, to inform readers of ordinary culture that the harem is a place and not a collection of wives, and that polygamy is far less common than it used to be. Respectable Turks—there are such beings, *pace* the pro-Armenian agitators—marry but one wife, as a rule, and would have but a sorry time of it with the wife's relations if they imported more wives; and the boy children live in the harem until they are fourteen. As for the manner of marriage, accurately described in Mr. Savage Landor's "Across Coveted Lands," nothing is likely to convince Englishmen that it is right. Bridegroom and bride never meet until the marriage ceremony commences, and all the preliminary negotiation is managed by old cronies in the nature of marriage brokers. Even in the act of going through the marriage ceremony, which is barbaric, the bridegroom does not see the bride unveiled, and when at last he sees her face it may, in spite of the former praises of the marriage-broker, turn out to be ugly or pockmarked. But, even so, instances of recusancy are few, for your average Turk, unlike your average Frank (that is to say, European of other than Turkish blood), is not familiar with the faces of women; so he is easily satisfied, and, at the very worst, being at heart and essentially a fatalist, he will say to himself, *kismet*, even in the face of that dire calamity a downright ugly wife. As for his bringing up at home and at school and at the madrasah, or quasi-theological college, it is simple, pious, and severe. For example, twenty strokes on the soles of his feet were young Halil's reward for playing the fool with the fezzes of his companions at school when they were prostrating themselves at prayer; and he was lame for several days afterwards, which one can readily believe. But the bastinado was applied to bare feet only when the offence was very heinous or when the culprit was suspected of having padded his feet.

The depressing part of the book is that dealing with Turkish administration, which may be summed up roughly as a mass of reticulated corruption. But that for Turkey, under good government, there would be real hope, is as clear as possible from a perusal of these pages. Halil Halid has, as the Americans have it, no use for Armenians. That they have fallen upon from time to time he does not deny; and this has been done with the connivance, perhaps, of the Sultans and of officials, many of whom were Armenians. But the massacres, which (as sensible Englishmen have long been aware) have been vastly exaggerated, were in no case purposeless. They were directed against a definite Home Rule movement, and that, although it affords no excuse for murder, puts a somewhat different complexion on the matter when it is remembered that the Turks are an intensely patriotic people.

Finally, Halil Halid gives a hint which some of our English traders might do worse than follow. Turkey, in spite of all things, is so far advancing in civilisation that the Turkish ladies desire to possess a large number of luxuries of the toilet enjoyed by their European sisters. But never, in any circumstances, can a Turkish lady be permitted to go out shopping. That, to English and French and American ladies, will seem the acme of hardship. But the Turkish lady makes up for it by buying of female pedlars, who do a roaring trade, for money is abundant in the harem, if nowhere else in Turkey, and it is a pity that the female pedlars of Turkey should have the monopoly. Nor—this is the impression left—would English female pedlars have much or anything to fear in Turkey, from the Turks—the Europeans in Turkey are a very different and more dangerous body.

Ibex Shooting on the Himalayas, by Major Neville Taylor (Sampson Low), is a record of exciting shooting by one of those rare men, equally accomplished with the pen and with the rifle, who can carry their readers along with them. The account of the shooting of his first ibex is as good as

the heart of man could desire. The party, having spied an ibex which had gone out of sight up wind on the far side of a ridge, had crossed a dangerous slope of snow, hollow beneath, and up sometimes to the knees, sometimes to the armpits. Major Taylor was all but exhausted. "My breath came short and quick, my heart felt like bursting, and the pulses of my temples sounded like hammers on an anvil; but still they hurried on, until, absolutely exhausted, I sank on to my face, done! Go further without rest I simply could not. Almost as I collapsed I heard the warning 'Hist,' and, looking up, I saw everyone flat on his face, while one of Lasso's fingers seemed to point straight upwards towards a great buttress of rock sticking boldly out towards us on the ridge. I involuntarily turned my eyes in the direction indicated, and there, sure enough, the points of two horns were visible and moving, the horns becoming more and more apparent, until quite suddenly the whole ibex came into view, 200yds. off. There he stood, looking down at us in an incredulous way, only his fore legs, chest, and heart visible, as with head alternately on one side and the other, he seemed to wonder what these prostrate forms could be, if forms indeed they were, up at this unwanted time of the year in his special preserves. I was so out of breath that to fire would have been useless; so, with a groan, I bowed my face to the ground and did not move for a full minute. When I looked up again he was still there. Something must be done soon, or not at all; so I slowly got the rifle into position, took as steady an aim as I could at his chest, which was all that I could see, and pulled the trigger. I knew it was a shaky shot, but I could not expect him to stand there for ever. 'Bang!' went the rifle, but the ibex did not seem to notice it as he stood for a moment, and then slowly turning round, moved up the hill, and out of sight. Almost immediately the two females crossed a small snow valley which divided the ridge from the next one on my left. If the big one should cross the same way I had yet a chance, and by this time I had got my breath and was quite steady. Half a minute after this, perhaps, the male emerged, walked slowly across the snow and, when fairly in the middle, stopped and surveyed us curiously. Now was my chance, and I fired absolutely steady at 300yds. He turned round sharply, slipping a little as he did so, and was out of sight. I flung myself on my back, and despair seized my heart, although Lasso went off to see if he was wounded, which he said he thought he was. I lit my pipe and gave myself up to the bitterest reflections." But in fact they got him, shot through the heart, and Chybra, the coolie, tobogganed down the snow slope on the body of the forty-incher; and all was merry in the land of avalanches. A sportsman's book of the first water.

All on the Irish Shore, by E. C. Somerville and Martin Ross (Longmans). Written in the same delightfully humorous vein as was the "Experiences of an Irish R.M.," this collection of short stories is a worthy successor of that most deservedly popular work. The authors have a perfect sympathy for and understanding of the Irish people, both peasants and gentry, and their ways. Among much that is excellent it is difficult to choose the absolute best, but "The Tinker's Dog" would be hard to beat. At the end of a disappointing day "two of the hounds were limping; all, judging by their expressions, were on the verge of tears." For dogs and horses E. C. Somerville and Martin Ross have as keen a sympathy as for men and women. "An Irish Problem" is a splendid account of a trial before magistrates. One J.P. is the local doctor and the other the keeper of the general shop and public-house combined, and the whole procedure is of a kind to turn the hair of an English magistrate of any class grey.

A very learned book is *The History and Law of Fisheries*, by Stuart A. Moore and Herbert Stuart Moore (Stevens and Haynes). In it is gathered the lore of several fishery and free fishery and common fishery and fishery in gross, etc. There are extracts from Domesday Book and Bracton and Exchequer Rolls and Post-Mortem Inquisitions and other such entertaining sources of information. Alas, that it should all be so exceedingly dull! Yet now and again you do come across an item of general interest. "In 1823 the last salmon ever caught in the Thames was taken near Monkey Island and sent to the King at Windsor." Again, within living memory ships took in their fresh water at the Pool. Here, too, is garnered the quaint lore of royal draught and fee draught, which same was a pleasant privilege enjoyed by the Crown and some great folk of sweeping with a net the whole of certain fisheries ever and anon. Also, you may or may not rejoice to hear that "balkers, huors, condors, directors, or guidors," who it seems were "used to watch and attend upon the high hills and grounds near adjoining to the sea-coasts," to the intent that when they saw herrings and pilchards in the distance they should warn the fishermen to come and catch, were to be allowed to go anywhere in the exercise of the useful vocation without fear of actions of trespass. And this was all three centuries ago. Yet one fears that all this learning is sometimes too much for the authors; thus on page 48 we are told that in 7 Edward II. (1313), the Abbott of Battle was in hot water for claiming a certain free and separate fishery. With all a churchman's tenacity he held fast to his rights, and had any amount of documentary evidence, from William the Conqueror downwards, to back him, and so proved his point and won the day. All which is no doubt very important and very interesting, but why repeat it twelve pages afterwards? Finally, one notes that the case of the Attorney-General against Emerson bulks very large in the book, which may or may not be because one of the learned authors was very much occupied indeed with this same case.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

The History of the Hawtreys Family, by Florence M. Hawtreys (2 vols., George Allen). In 1475 the Hawtreys had been at Chequers, in Buckinghamshire, for 250 years, and they have flourished, mostly in an unassuming way, ever since, serving their country in various capacities, as is the custom of old families. Miss Hawtreys has embalmed their history, their pedigrees, and their correspondence, in some 900 pages! There are portions of the book—that relating to the Irish Rebellion of '98, and those having to do with the Eton Hawtreys, for example—which are interesting generally, but the mass of it can appeal only to the members of the family. The book may be confidently recommended as a mine of wealth to seekers for magazine articles, or for quiet reading on a desert island.

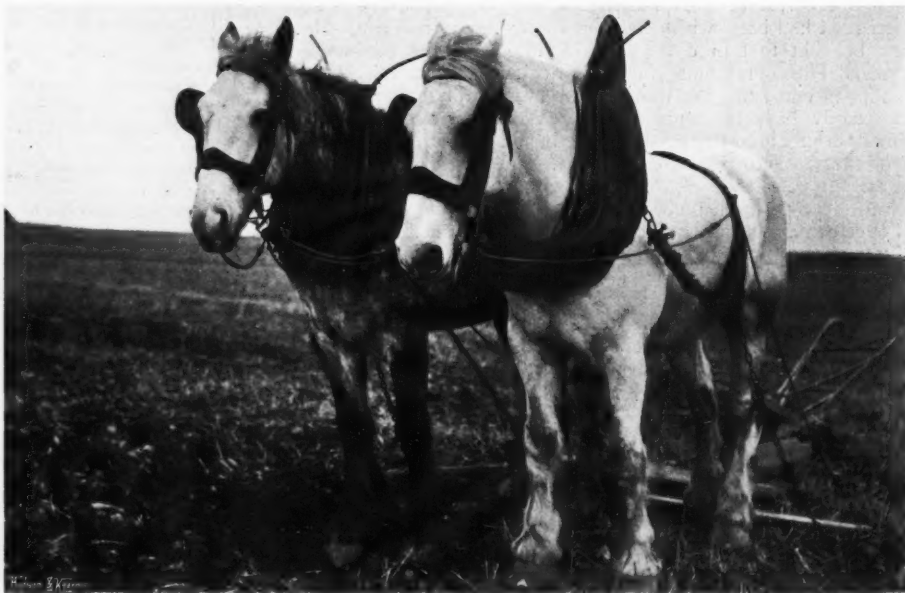
From the Unvarying Star, by Elsworth Lawson (Macmillan). Inscribed "to the memory of Emanuel Lawson, a holy, humble, brave-hearted, British working-man," by his son, this is an eminently Nonconformist novel with a Northumbrian setting. But, in its quiet way, it is not without attraction, and we like much the sprightly maid Helen, who encounters Stephen Austin, the dreamy poet-preacher, in a wood on Royal Oak day, and compels him to pay the penalty (of having his palm stung by a nettle) for being without the traditional sprig of oak. But the book as a whole is not lively.

The Boers in Europe, by G. W. T. Omond (Black). Mr. Omond tells, and that elaborately and well, the story of the Boer campaign in the Press, on the platform, and in the closet on the Continent since the war began and ended. The only question is whether it is worth while to rake up these ashes anew now. Most people will answer that it is not; those who think otherwise will find the process made easy for them in these pages.

FROM THE FARMS.

SPRAYING CHARLOCK.

A CORRESPONDENT, Mr. C. S. Schreiber, some time ago sent us the following query: "I see in the article in COUNTRY LIFE entitled 'From the Farms' there is advice given for getting rid of the charlock weed by spraying with sulphate of copper. Would you kindly inform me if this would be an effectual remedy for destroying weeds and thistles on grass lands? In an estate I know of in South America there is a weed something like the cow parsley that grows at an alarming rate, and I am very anxious to know if it would be possible to destroy this by spraying. I should be much obliged if you would let me have your opinion." We sent this letter to the Board of Agriculture, and Sir T. H. Elliot has been so kind as to reply to the effect that "information concerning the eradication of weeds will be found in reports by Dr. Voelcker in the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England for 1901, page 334, and for 1902, page 359. Indications of the action of a solution of copper sulphate on thistles and other weeds are given in the 'Eighth Annual Report on Experiments with Crops and Stock in the Counties of Cumberland, Durham, and Northumberland,' and in 'Agricultural Experiments: Five Years' Work at the



C. Reid, Wislaw, N.B.

A HOMELY TEAM.

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Northumberland County Demonstration Farm,' page 42, both published by Messrs. Andrew Reid and Company, Newcastle-upon-Tyne."

THE PRESERVATION OF EGGS.

At this season of the year, when eggs are so plentiful and so cheap, the duty of the poultry farmer is to preserve them for use in the dearer times of winter. Many times during the course of

the year enquiries are sent us as to the best methods of doing this, and as it happens that Mr. Edward Brown, the well-known specialist, contributes an article on the subject to the current number of the Journal of the Board of Agriculture, it may be of interest to our readers to transcribe the more important part of it. He mentions waterglass, but our own experience is that it is not quite satisfactory. For one thing, the eggs get so hard that you require a hammer and chisel to break them. Cold storage, again, is not worth doing except on a very extensive scale, and so we return to the old-fashioned method of using lime-water. Mr. Brown says it was invented a hundred years ago by William Jayne, who took out a patent for an egg pickle, but the recipe usually employed has, in our experience, acted quite satisfactorily. The lime-water is made by mixing four parts by measure of finely slaked lime with twenty parts of water, and afterwards adding one part of salt. "This solution should be prepared by mixing the lime and the water a week before it is used, and stirring well together daily, adding the salt on the fourth or fifth day. The eggs should be placed in vats, or barrels, or corks, and the cleared solution poured over them, taking care to avoid adding any of the lime sediment, otherwise there is danger of the solution becoming a solid mass. It is desirable not to fill the vessel with eggs, but to allow zin. or jin. of solution above the top layer. An excellent arrangement is to add a little fresh solution occasionally, in order to provide for evaporation. An egg preserved by this method is easily discernible by the roughness of the shell. When boiled the shell cracks, owing to the lime having caused the outer covering to become hard and brittle. This may generally be obviated by pricking the broad end with a needle before it is placed in the water."

GENERAL UTILITY COWS.

Under this head Mr. H. Bissell writes an eulogy of shorthorns in the new issue of the "Country Gentlemen's Estate Book." His chief point, of course, is that they are the best general purpose cows, and to justify his contention he quotes an instance of a good milker sold direct from the pail for £29 10s., which would not have been bad for a tolerably fat beast. He gives the preference to Booth's shorthorns for butcher's cows, and to Bate's shorthorns for milking cows. He gives the record of Red Queen as an example of a first-rate dairy cow. "She is a red and white seven year old, has produced five calves, and was exhibited by Mr. George Long of Ogbourne St. Andrew at the recent Dairy Show, where she won the Lord Mayor's Cup and Barham Challenge Shield in the milking trials, with a total score of 154.4 points, a considerable advance on any previous record in the shorthorn tests." She gave a great quantity of milk, namely, 74lb. daily, the percentage of butter fat being 3.33 in the morning and 4.02 in the evening, but when these two milks were mixed the percentage could only have been a little over 3.6, which is sailing dangerously near the Governmental standard of 3.5. In the butter test she did not do well, being only highly commended, and, frankly speaking, we do not think a cow of that description could be properly described as a good butter cow. Certainly a Jersey would have been much more profitable for butter-making purposes, though, of course, when her milking days were done she would not bring even an appreciable fraction of £30 for beef. Mr. Bissell has a great deal to say in favour of the shorthorn-Ayrshire cross, but we doubt if it would yield a very good quality of milk. A shorthorn-Guernsey is a very much more promising cross.

POLO PROSPECTS.

WHILE it would be unwise to deny that the game of polo is entering on a difficult period of its existence, yet on the whole the prospects of the game, if we limit our view to the coming season, are bright enough. The restoration of the Inter-Regimental Tournament to the list of fixtures is of itself sufficient to make the polo season an unusually interesting one. But this is not the chief cause for congratulation to those who believe in the usefulness as well as the interest of polo. The game, properly conducted, is a semi-military exercise, by which not only professional soldiers, but all who take part, receive a valuable training. In the matter of military horsemanship polo is a step beyond the hunting-field as a means of education, for when we are

hunting we have only ourselves and our horses to think of, whereas when we are playing polo we have to consider how best to use the right arm and the stick with accuracy and freedom, and our riding at polo is a means to an end, as, of course, is all military equitation. To be so at one with our horse that we are independent of him in the use of our arms is the perfection of useful horsemanship. This is taught at polo pleasantly, and yet most effectively.

No one can glance over the resolutions of the very repre-



AT PASTURE.

sentative body of cavalry soldiers which met in January last, without being struck by the note of common-sense and moderation which pervades the original resolutions and the simple and practical nature of the rules for the tournament. There are some among these rules which should secure regimental polo from all undue extravagance in the matter of ponies—the limitation of the number from which the final selection is to be made to twenty; of the actual number used in the tournament to fifteen for each team; the regulation that all ponies are to be unconditionally the property of the regiment; and Rule 4, which provides that the expenses are to be defrayed from an inter-regimental polo fund which will be derived from the gate-money received for the matches. It is evidently not right that soldiers should be put to expense to swell the profits of wealthy clubs. The representation of the Army on the Hurlingham Polo Committee will be for the general benefit, though we are bound to say that the Hurlingham proviso that no officer of the Army can represent the Army on the governing body of polo unless he is also a member of Hurlingham, does not seem quite sufficiently to respect the dignity of the Service. But the more we consider this stipulation, the more clearly do we see that it cannot possibly be maintained, and that, sooner or later, Hurlingham must give way on this point or give place to a really representative body. It is a matter for congratulation to all lovers of the game that the soldiers should have drawn up, and the Commander-in-Chief sanctioned, rules which, when the suggestion that ponies shall be trained in the regiments is made into a rule and not left as a counsel of perfection, will establish polo in the Army on a sounder basis than it has ever been before. Unfortunately there are a few things that must be regretted. Ranelagh will not be represented on the Polo Committee. It was evident from the first that that club could not accept the inadequate representation of one member without a protest. If we consider the fact that this club has a very large list of members who are polo players, that some of the leading tournaments of the year, such as the Hunt Cup, the Ranelagh Open Cup, the Novices' Tournament, are played on its ground, that the match ground is now one of the best in England, that large sums of money have been and are being spent on its pavilion and stables, it was plain, and should have been obvious to all concerned, that the committee could not accept a representation no greater than that offered to the latest club, and much less than is given to the County Polo Association. The total number of the players represented by the County Polo Association not being much larger than the polo membership of Ranelagh, it was quite right to represent the county polo clubs up to and even beyond their proportion of members, but the disproportion of three to one is too great. The polo players have always been hitherto a body so united that it is a pity even to make discord possible.

In another fortnight or so we shall have begun the season with the tournaments in which the "off-side" question will be worked out carefully and thoroughly at the two leading clubs. On the results of these tournaments will depend the future of polo so far as this rule is concerned. We do not think that, in view of the probable opposition from India, we shall see off-side done away with, but that the existing rule will be modified, and the task of the umpires simplified by clearer wording, we have very little doubt. The suggested alterations which the Hurlingham

committee put forward and then withdrew shows the direction in which their minds are working. There is an actual change in a rule which we shall see in force, and about which we shall be able to form our own judgments. The rule as to stick crooking is now altered, so that that method of impeding the adversary is almost abolished. There is only one moment at which we may crook a stick, and that is when the adversary is "in the act of hitting" the ball. This rule will be watched most carefully. We somewhat distrust it, on the ground that it is always a bad thing in the interests of any game to give too great an advantage to skill over chance. If once the victory becomes a certainty for skilled players, either by reason of their accuracy of stroke or their combination, the end of the popularity of that game is not far off.

In walking over the Ranelagh match ground the other day (one which we have known from the first), it was impossible not to note how greatly improved the ground is in smoothness and how much quicker and truer it is than it was. But if, while the improvement of grounds goes on, rules are altered in favour of the skilled player, there is a rock ahead which those in authority may well take note of. But with the prospect of so many excellent and exciting games before us, and with the ponies better trained and more numerous than ever before, we may surely look forward to a peculiarly interesting season. The very problems that have to be solved add to the interest with which we shall take part in and watch the games. All the clubs round London have put forward full programmes, and Roehampton, the London Polo Club, and Eden Park are sure to have first-rate polo, in addition to the well-known matches and tournaments which are of annual recurrence at the older clubs. With the Inter-Regimental, from which, however, we shall miss the 4th and 10th Hussars and 9th and 12th Lancers, and a full entry for the Champion Cup and the Ranelagh Open Cup, we have an excellent programme to look forward to till the Rugby and Leamington weeks warn us that the season is drawing to a close.

X.

POLLARD HORNBEAMS.

THE fine picture which we show of pollard hornbeams will, we hope, have more interest a century hence than it has at the present moment, for by the time another hundred years have slipped away it may fairly be expected that Epping Forest, wherein this photograph was taken, will contain no more of them. Yet they have, as is well known, a considerable historical interest. The right of

lopping trees was one of the privileges of those who were commoners of the forest in the old times. They seem to have made abundant use of it, for there are parts of Epping Forest where one can scarcely see a tree growing in its natural condition, though, as need hardly be mentioned, no pollarding has taken place since the forest came into the possession of the public through the action of the Corporation of London. As compensation for giving up the privilege of taking firewood from the great woodland, a public hall was built for the inhabitants of Loughton, who promptly gave the place the name of the "Loppers' Hall." In addition to the legal pollarding of trees, a great deal of injury was done by people in search of firewood. It has been the constant aim of the verderer to encourage natural growth, and, bit by bit, to get rid of these monstrosities. We call them by that name, but there are many who admire the fantastic and curious shapes which hornbeams will often assume after they have been subjected to the action of the lopper's knife.

THE WAYS OF THE WATER-SHREW.

A SEMI-CIRCLE of slight undulations, slowly spreading from the bank out into the stream, caused me to cease rowing and let my boat glide quietly into a little creek fringed with cuckoo-flowers and seeding sedges, and covered with a floating mantle of white-flowered water-crowfoot. Then I sat silent and motionless, watching the spot whence the ripples had come. It was a little oozy ledge, strewn with fragments of small shells and roofed by a mossy alder root. Behind the root, I had no doubt, was the entrance to one of the many tunnels or burrows which honeycombed the bank, and I expected every moment to see a water-vole return to the muddy stoop of its river-side home.

For some time I waited in vain; but one must have plenty of patience in dealing with the shy inhabitants of a river bank, and, after having my attention momentarily distracted by some tiny fish fry which were violently tilting against a floating rush in order to dislodge some aquatic insects, my patience was rewarded, for when I looked at the ledge again I saw emerge suddenly from the water not a vole, but a pretty little black-backed, sharp-nosed water-shrew, a much rarer animal, and one which, wherever it is found, is so shy as to afford only the slightest opportunities for cultivating its acquaintance. It seemed to be carrying some very small object in its mouth, but whether it was a fresh-water shrimp or the larva of a caddis-fly I was not near enough to see, and no sooner had the shrew landed on the ledge than it disappeared into the cave-like hole under the alder root.

About three minutes later I caught sight of its sharp nose poking



AN EFFECT OF LOPPING.

inquisitively out of the hole. I believe—but I am not quite sure of this—that I detected a working of its nostrils, as though it were snuffing for the scent of any danger that might lurk outside its stronghold. The shadow cast upon the ledge by a swaying rush caused the nose to vanish, but soon after, having satisfied itself that no danger threatened, the shrew ran down the sloping ledge and dived into the stream. There I should have lost sight of it had it not, when a foot or two from the bank, turned half over in the water and given me a glimpse of its silvery belly ere it swam into the midst of a jungle of dark green conferva which hid much of the pebbly bed of the creek. Half a minute later, having emerged unseen by me from its aqueous covert, it popped up on the edge of the ledge again, this time—there was no mistaking it—with a tiny fish—perhaps a young loach—in its mouth. Seeing this, I thought of what I had read about water-shrews attacking a shoal of salmon fry.

As a matter of fact, the water-shrew is not only piscivorous but carnivorous. Dead rats, voles, and birds it is very fond of, and from what I have seen I have a suspicion that it is not averse to making a meal off a putrid portion of a drowned cat. I never heard of its killing any small bird or mammal, but for all that I should not be surprised to learn that it occasionally carries off a tiny water-hen or dabchick or pays a visit to the nest of a meadow-pipit or reed-bunting. An animal whose bill of fare includes salmon fry and frog spawn, molluscs and dead rats, is hardly likely to hesitate at a tender nestling.

Seen under water, this shrew, like the water-vole, has a greyish appearance, owing to the tiny air-bubbles which cling to its fur, and though it is generally black above and white below, the species shows considerable variation in colouring. Brown and chestnut examples are not infrequently met with, while albinos, I believe, have been found in dry situations. It usually makes its nest of grass in a small chamber at the end of a winding tunnel in the bank of some stream, where in the spring the female gives birth to from five to seven, occasionally more, young ones. On mild days in winter it sometimes emerges for a while from its burrow, so I imagine it is not so much addicted to hibernation as is the common shrew.

Brooks with rippling shallows and pebbly shores are more favoured by it than are sluggish streams; but it has been known to make its home in the bank of a pond, and on one occasion, while strolling along the bank of a rather deep marsh dyke, I saw a water-shrew very busy among the stems of some water-potamogetons and bur-reeds. Apparently it was searching for the small shellfish and insects which are always to be found on the submerged portions of these plants. On that occasion I was able to notice the singular swollen appearance of its sides when swimming, for when it had found what it wanted among the plants it came to the top of the water and swam along the surface to the bank. It did this with more than half of its body out of the water, and the expansion of its sides was very remarkable. When it dived this swelling was not detectable, and I am inclined to think that it only resorts to this curious inflation in order to acquire additional buoyancy in swimming on the surface. As soon as it reached the shore it resumed its normal appearance.

This pretty little creature is not without its enemies. In early life it is lucky to escape the stoats, weasels, and kestrels, which are always on the look-out for such small deer, and all its life long it runs the risk of being snapped up by some hungry pike. Risky it is, too, for it to venture abroad within reach of a fishing heron, for, although "Owd Frank"—as the Norfolk marshmen call him—may seem to be turning all his attention waterwards, he can always see out of the corner of his eye any little whiskered nose that may be poked out of a bank burrow.

Like many other timid wild creatures, however, the water-shrew has its share of what Mr. W. J. Long calls "the gladsome life," and both in and out of the water it indulges in playfulness of the liveliest kind when it feels assured that no danger threatens. And no prettier sight is to be seen by the brookside than a family of young shrews chasing each other over and around the pebbles.

WILLIAM A. DUTT.

ON THE GREEN.

IT seems rather quaint, considering how long we have been playing this great game of golf, that we have not even yet come to any wholly satisfactory conclusion as to the best way of arranging our competitions. We have our open and our amateur championships decided on different lines, the former by score and the latter by match tournament. Even the highest wisdom in the land cannot quite satisfy itself about the best way of playing the Parliamentary Tournament. The preliminary qualifying "hockey" round, which has been played for a year or two to reduce the numbers of the match players, has been discarded, and a return is to be made to the old plan of match play all through. But the retrogressive motion was carried by a very small majority, and the Prime Minister, perhaps with a livelier sense of the meaning of obstruction than most of the members, voted in the minority. Nor does a consensus seem more easy to arrive at in America, where they have the advantage over us of being hampered by no traditions. The United States Golf Association is even now sending out to the prominent players of that great country a series of four alternative schemes for the decision of the amateur championship of the States. There is a suggestion (a) that there shall be thirty-six holes of qualifying score play, and that the best thirty-two scorers shall play out by match tournament in matches of thirty-six holes; suggestion (b) that there shall be eighteen holes of qualifying score play, and that the best sixty-four shall play out in matches of eighteen holes, except the final and semi-final matches, which shall be of thirty-six holes each; suggestion (c) which is a compromise between (a) and (b); and suggestion (d) which is that the championship shall be played exactly on the lines of an amateur

championship. The plan of taking a plebiscite, as it were, among those who are likely to be personally interested in the match, has much to recommend it, and might be noted for use over here. The method which seems to have least popular support on the other side is suggestion (d)—our own admired system.

They are terrible people, those Americans. The latest "notion" in the way of golf balls seems to be a ball with compressed air inside. One wonders what would happen if one of these burst.

Speaking of my own humble judgment, I am dead against any alteration of the rules, such as standardisation of balls or clubs implies, at present; but it has to be confessed that the question is only one of degree, and that if improvements in the instruments of the game go on indefinitely, some legislation of the kind will be needed. A club and ball that would drive a normal distance of 300 yds. would obviously knock all our present courses into foolishness, and we seem to walk quite far enough to please most of us between the hits as it is—that is, between the good hits—and there is no guarantee that the Americans or some other ingenious upsetters of the established order will not invent such things before long. For the Haskell ball we have much gratitude, but this compressed air business sounds uncanny. They will have detonating dynamite in the club heads next.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

CORRESPONDENCE.

A PRETTY APPROACH.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—The enclosed photograph may be of interest as showing how suitable an approach to an old house is furnished by a grass walk between herbaceous borders. The timber-built Tudor house in the background is the old Manor House at Walton-on-Thames, and was once the home of Bradshaw the



Regicide. It is still in good condition and, being well cared for, seems likely to last for a long time yet.—L. B.

ENGLAND'S WATERWAYS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In the able article on the importance of an efficient system for transporting goods from one part of England to another, you point out that where time is not a matter of importance waterways afford the easiest and cheapest solution of the problem, and suggest that the motor should be used instead of the miserable old horse that has heretofore hauled the heavy-laden, slow-moving barges along our canals. There is, no doubt, a future for this system of transport, but before it can be of any great practical value the opposition of the various railway companies will have to be overcome. In many cases the canals, which were once busy highways, over which there was a constant stream of traffic, are to all intents and purposes closed, because the railway companies found it to their advantage to buy up the rights of the old canal-owners and prevent competition. There is one canal running through a portion of England which, although within easy distance of London, the greatest market in the world, has not made any great progress for the last hundred years, and this splendid waterway is almost entirely unused. The channel is overgrown with water weeds and the towpath is falling to pieces, simply because the tariff charged for lock dues, etc., is so high that barge-owners cannot afford to compete with the railway rates. I hope to live to see the day when England's waterways will be as busy as those of Holland, and the merchandise of England's producers carried as cheaply. If your influential paper takes up the matter, no doubt this desirable end will be hastened.—AN ENGLISH FARMER.

THE PERSIMMON OR DATE PLUM.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you would tell me something about the persimmon or date plum which I have purchased in Covent Garden Market, and regard somewhat as a luxury. The fruits are orange-scarlet, but vary

somewhat in shade, and very pleasant eating. Can the plum be grown outdoors in the North, or is it a fruit for this climate?—A. B.

[The date plum or diospyros is the Diospyros Kaki of gardens, and has been grown for its fruits for centuries in China and Japan. No, it is not hardy, but will mature its fruits in a sunny greenhouse, and this has been accomplished in the Royal Gardens, Kew, with great success. We believe the fruit has ripened outdoors in the South of England, but this is exceptional. It may interest you to know what Professor Sargent has to say of it in his remarkable work, "Forest Flora of Japan": "The persimmon is planted everywhere in the neighbourhood of houses, which, in the interior of the main island, are often embowered in small groves of this handsome tree. In shape it resembles a well-grown apple tree, with a straight trunk, spreading branches which droop toward the extremities and form a compact round head. Trees 30ft. to 40ft. high are often seen, and in the autumn, when they are covered with fruit, and the leaves have turned to the colour of old Spanish red leather, they are exceedingly handsome. Perhaps there is no tree except the orange which as a fruit tree is as beautiful as the kaki. In Central and Northern Japan the variety which produces large orange-coloured, ovate, thick-skinned fruit is the only one planted, and the cultivation of the red-fruited varieties with which we have become acquainted in this country is confined to the South. A hundred varieties of kaki at least are now recognised and named by Japanese gardeners, but few of them are important commercially in any part of the country which we visited, and, except in Kyoto, where red kakis appeared, the only form I saw exposed for sale was the orange-coloured variety, which, fresh and dried, is consumed in immense quantities by the Japanese, who eat it, as they do all their fruits, before it is ripe, and while it has the texture and consistency of a paving-stone (!)" Unless, therefore, we see a fruit or you say what the colouring is, we cannot be sure of the variety you purchased.—ED.]

A WATCHMAN'S BOX.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Is the enclosed photograph of any interest for your pages? It is a watchman's sentry-box in Norfolk Crescent, Bath. The inscription certifies that it is the only box left in Bath. It is, of course, a relic of the days before policemen were introduced by Sir Robert Peel. The box is of stone, with a wooden door, having a glass light at the top.—FRED HORNER, Bath.



FOOD OF GREEN LINNETS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I have for some time past been trying to tame the wild birds in my garden. I have succeeded in attracting a good many of different sorts to the window for food, among

which are five or six green linnets, most regular customers, who eat a good deal of hemp as well as other seed put out for them. I have for some time noticed a white warty growth over a hen linnet's eye, and gradually the other eye has also become surrounded. I succeeded in catching her the other day, and found that the eyes themselves are not affected. Since this I have noticed another bird (green linnet) afflicted in the same way. Can the hemp seed, of which they eat an inordinate quantity, have anything to do with it?—TENBY.

[No, hemp seed would not be at all injurious to birds living an active wild life, and certainly would not cause any warty growth.—ED.]



A TAME GAZELLE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—On a recent visit to Palestine I was introduced to an inmate of St. Mary's Home, Jerusalem—Rami—whose portrait I enclose. This gazelle was captured when quite young among the hills of Judea, and has been kept at St. Mary's during the past year. She is so tame that she will steal sugar off the table at afternoon tea, runs about the house like a dog, and is a great pet with ladies and pupils in the Home. I have frequently come across gazelles in the desert of Sinai and in the wild hills of Syria, but have never succeeded in getting even a distant snap-shot at them. The photograph was taken in the grounds of St. Mary's Home in October, 1902.—J. E.

RAINBOW TROUT.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There is within a short distance of my house a lake of about five acres, which we intend to stock with rainbow trout. It is of triangular shape, one side being bordered with trees, varies in depth from 1ft. to 6ft., the bottom all over consists of about 3ft. of thick black mud, and it has a stream flowing through it more or less continually, except in the months of July, August, and September, when it is absolutely without a fresh flow of water and gets very thick and slimy. It is at present stocked with pike, bream, roach, tench, and an enormous quantity of eels. The question is, would rainbow trout prosper, and if they did, would they successfully run the gauntlet of the pike?—the pike, be it said, are not very numerous. Also, if we did stock the lake with rainbows, what size would be best—yearlings, two year olds, or bigger? For any information on the subject I shall be deeply indebted.—A WOULD-BE TROUT-FISHER.

[From your description of the lake, rainbow trout would prosper, but it would be necessary to put in good-sized fish, certainly not less than 5in. to 7in., if the pike are not exterminated. It would be better, however, to drain the lake and clear out the mud, at the same time getting rid of the pike. We should advise you to try, say, about 200 this season as an experiment.—ED.]

BRAHMIN BULL IN HARNESS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of a Brahmin bull in case it is good enough for COUNTRY LIFE. The bull is the property of Miss Elaine Barber Starkey, and is regularly driven by her. He was bred near London and is 2½ years old. It was Miss Starkey's idea to break him in to harness, which she did entirely by herself.—DIGBY LEGARD, Northampton.